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IWW Liquor Store Workers Fired For Union Activity

By the Twin Cities IWW

On Saturday, April 6, passers-by were treated to the sight of a large picket outside of Minnesota's highest volume liquor store, Chicago Lake Liquors (Chi-Lake), in Minneapolis. Picketers held signs and chanted slogans of support for the workers of the store, five of whom were fired after asking for higher wages as a part of a union drive with the IWW.

Although workers had been discussing forming a union and acting for better conditions in their workplace for almost a year, the event marked the first time any of them publicly declared their IWW affiliation. This declaration and action came on the heels of management firing five union employees—Hallie Wallace, Arella Vargas, Max Spektor, Davis Ritsema, and Joe Giwoyna—shortly after these workers presented a petition signed by the majority of the shop's workforce asking for a dollar raise for raising the \$10.50 pay cap to

\$13 an hour. In January, the workers also turned in a petition asking for holiday pay.

"If there's anywhere that needs a union, it's a store like Chi-Lake," said Wallace. "Despite the immense amount of money that we bring in, our wages are incredibly low. We have no paid sick days or holiday pay. Scheduling is inconsistent, and we put up with unsafe working conditions and sexual harassment on a daily basis. We've come together to demand respect and dignity on the job for everyone working at Chi-Lake, and they've responded with nothing more than aggressive union busting," she added.

At the picket, the workers and supporters demanded that management rehire those whom they fired illegally, provide all the employees with the requested raises, and stop union busting.

In addition to the picket action, the five fired workers also filed unfair labor practice complaints (ULPs) with the National

Labor Relations Board (NLRB).

"We will keep fighting until they rehire all five of the fired workers and give us all the raises we deserve. We're not going to allow ourselves to be bullied by management. We're going to win this fight," said Spektor.

The campaign at Chicago Lake Liquors represents a new step for Food and Retail Workers United, an organizing committee of the IWW.



Wobblies and supporters picket Chicago Lake Liquors on April 6.

Photos: libcom.org

Sisters' Camelot Workers Continue Strike

By X364359 and X370448

Striking canvassers were unsurprised but appalled to learn on Monday morning, April 8, that the management collective (which disingenuously calls itself a "worker collective") at Sisters' Camelot in Minneapolis had refused the strikers' latest offer to end the strike. The union had made significant concessions in the offer, scrapping all economic demands except for medical coverage for on-the-job injuries, but retaining their demands for workplace democracy.

The Sisters' Camelot canvassers began organizing in December 2012 and shortly thereafter reached out to the IWW for assistance. The Sisters' Camelot Canvass Union went public to the managing collective on Feb. 25 as members of the IWW. They presented their demands to their bosses on March 1. After a few clarifying questions and a one-hour long recess, the collective refused to negotiate on any of their demands. The



Picket on anniversary of strike. Photo: The Organizer

workers declared they were on strike and left the meeting. After the following collective meeting on March 4, the collective fired striking canvasser ShugE Mississippi, accusing him of stealing money in 2009 and being manipulative and abusive (see "Wobblies Organize, Strike At Nonprofit In Minneapolis," April IW, page 1).

Since that time, the canvassers began door-knocking around the community to

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Star Tickets Workers Face Retaliation

By Evelyn Stone and Deirdre Cunningham

Since going public in late January, we in the IWW Star Tickets Workers Union in Grand Rapids, Mich., have faced retaliation from our employer. We are responding to these union-busting activities with phone zaps, internet actions, picket lines, and an unfair labor practice (ULP) complaint with the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB).

Retaliation against the union began on March 11, when a client services representative at the Star Tickets call center was fired and replaced by an independent contract worker following our successful vote to unionize on March 6. The contract worker was hired under a two-month contract.

Following this, a shop certification for the Star Tickets call center was issued on March 25. One of the lead organizers and a client services representative, Deirdre Cunningham, was fired on March 26. On March 27, a ULP charge was filed with the NLRB, alleging that the discharge of the first client services representative was to discourage concerted activities and to erode the bargaining unit and that FW Deirdre's discharge was discrimination due to union activity. She has been working at Star Tickets for nine years so for her to be fired the day after union certification was extremely transparent.

Garret Ellison of Mlive.com quoted resident officer at the Grand Rapids NLRB Tom Good as saying that the NLRB would be launching an investigation into the firing and that such firings are not uncommon. The article went on to say that Michigan's new right-to-work law, which took effect March 28, has no direct bearing on the case because the new law doesn't directly affect the union organizing or election process.



Workers picket on April 1. Photo: grsbuxunion.blogspot.com

Tom Good said if the investigation determines that Deirdre has a case, the NLRB will try and settle the issue by seeking reinstatement and back pay. If some kind of settlement cannot be worked out, the NLRB may issue a complaint ahead of scheduling a hearing before an administrative law judge in Grand Rapids.

Punitive firings like this have been effective in frightening other workers away from participating in the union because they have a legitimate fear of illegal retaliation. Deirdre has declined an offer of severance pay, preferring to fight for justice rather than be paid off to go away. This puts her in a bad situation financially, but we believe her reinstatement is necessary to demonstrate to our fellow workers that they'll be protected if they stand up for themselves. In another example of retaliation, two other organizers received write-ups on March 28 for small mistakes that, in the past, they would not have been written up for, and, we contend that, if non-union workers had made these mistakes, they would not have been written up. One of these organizers, Alisa Stone, has been working at Star Tickets for three years and never gotten a write-up, and, on the week of our certification, she got two. Again, this is very transparent. Our office is small, and our organizing committee

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Organizing

The Struggle Continues In Wisconsin: Two Years And Counting

By Matty O’Dea

It was another sad day for the protesters in the state of Wisconsin: on March 1, 2013, the “John Doe” investigation of Governor Scott Walker was closed, and he came out unscathed. This investigation began in 2010, six months before he was elected governor.

Since the 2012 recall election of Walker failed due to the incompetence of the state’s Democratic party and their candidate, former mayor of Milwaukee Tom Barrett—who conceded his election only 40 minutes after the polls closed—the investigation of Walker was what seemed to be Wisconsin’s last chance to rid itself of the tyrannical union-busting governor, and to shed a light of hope for the state and for working-class families, students and the elderly.

Walker and his hoard of like-minded Republican senators and state representatives succeeded in collectively destroying the labor movement in the state, which led to hundreds of thousands of workers, students and concerned citizens taking matters into their own hands. It was the biggest fight the labor movement had seen in this country in many years.

The occupation of the state capitol in

Madison on March 9, 2011, was in utter defiance of the governor’s attack on the working class, students and the elderly. Protests against Walker, Republican senators and state representatives, as well as Walker’s Tea Party supporters, have been going on for over two years. Now every day, protesters gather at the capitol for the weekly solidarity sing-a-long and belt out songs of defiance against the state’s political system. Agitation through song is the only way people felt that they could educate folks as to what was going on in their state.

Since the occupation, protesters have been arrested, threatened, ticketed, and followed home by the capitol police at the orders of the new capitol police chief, David E. Erwin. Erwin and his officers have tried to silence the voice of protesters, which sparked a free speech fight in the state capitol. Fellow workers from the IWW in Madison have stood side-by-side with other protesters, being arrested and ticketed for using their right to free speech.

What lawmakers in Wisconsin and the state police refuse to comprehend is, to quote Utah Phillips, “The state can’t give you freedom, and the state can’t take it away. You’re born with it, like your eyes,

like your ears. Freedom is something you assume, then you wait for someone to try to take it away. The degree to which you resist is the degree to which you are free.”

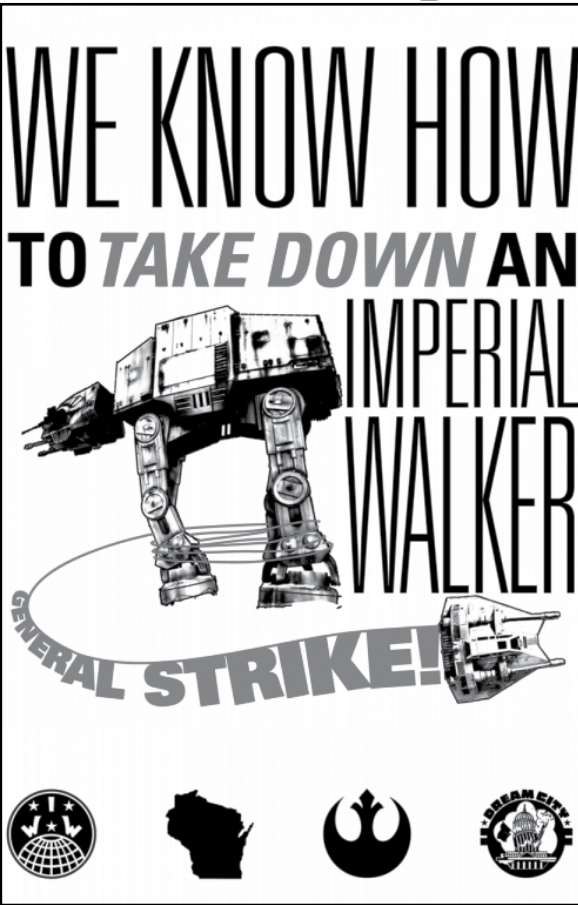
But together Wobblies and protesters have refused to back down. The Wisconsin Department of Justice has been called to prosecute the protesters for the crimes of blocking/obstructing

passageways in the capitol, side-walk chalkings, chanting and singing (which are considered to be “noise disturbances”).

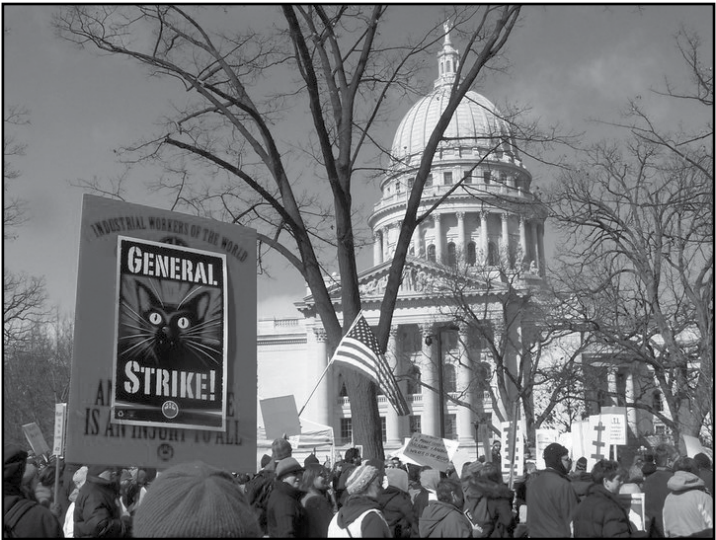
It’s ironic that, due to the recently-passed “concealed-carry law” in the state of Wisconsin, it’s legal to bring a gun into the capitol but illegal hold signs or banners or even sing. On a lighter note, charges are being dropped daily, since they are in violation of the First Amendment. So the singing, banner-waving and sign-holding inside the capitol are still going on, and the struggle for free speech continues.

Every day, this state’s legislators take more for themselves and leave everyone else in a bind. State unemployment is at 6.6 percent, where at the national level the unemployment rate is 7.8 percent. A contentious mining bill passed, and the beautiful Northwoods will now be damaged. Native American reservations are going to be hit with this the most. Mining companies are bringing in out-of-state workers to work the mines, leaving Wisconsin miners out of work.

It seems that, no matter what happens, the Republicans are continuing to win and are destroying the state and its natural resources. The labor movement in Wisconsin is dying at a rapid rate. A general strike is possibly the only thing that can save Wisconsin’s working class and its labor movement. The South Central Federation of Labor seems to be negligent with this form of action; they are the only ones with enough strength to actually pull this off. Workers need to take matters into their own hands, but it’s been said that many are terrified of losing their jobs, that it’s something that they can’t afford. It seems as though the labor movement in Wisconsin has lost the meaning of what unionism is. Unionism is



Graphic: libcom.org



Wobs protest in Madison, March 2011.

Photo: Diane Krauthamer

IWW Constitution Preamble

The working class and the employing class have nothing in common. There can be no peace so long as hunger and want are found among millions of working people and the few, who make up the employing class, have all the good things of life. Between these two classes a struggle must go on until the workers of the world organize as a class, take possession of the means of production, abolish the wage system, and live in harmony with the earth.

We find that the centering of the management of industries into fewer and fewer hands makes the trade unions unable to cope with the ever-growing power of the employing class. The trade unions foster a state of affairs which allows one set of workers to be pitted against another set of workers in the same industry, thereby helping defeat one another in wage wars. Moreover, the trade unions aid the employing class to mislead the workers into the belief that the working class have interests in common with their employers.

These conditions can be changed and the interest of the working class upheld only by an organization formed in such a way that all its members in any one industry, or all industries if necessary, cease work whenever a strike or lockout is on in any department thereof, thus making an injury to one an injury to all.

Instead of the conservative motto, “A fair day’s wage for a fair day’s work,” we must inscribe on our banner the revolutionary watchword, “Abolition of the wage system.”

It is the historic mission of the working class to do away with capitalism. The army of production must be organized, not only for the everyday struggle with capitalists, but also to carry on production when capitalism shall have been overthrown. By organizing industrially we are forming the structure of the new society within the shell of the old.

Join the IWW Today

The IWW is a union for all workers, a union dedicated to organizing on the job, in our industries and in our communities both to win better conditions today and to build a world without bosses, a world in which production and distribution are organized by workers ourselves to meet the needs of the entire population, not merely a handful of exploiters.

We are the Industrial Workers of the World because we organize industrially – that is to say, we organize all workers on the job into one union, rather than dividing workers by trade, so that we can pool our strength to fight the bosses together.

Since the IWW was founded in 1905, we have recognized the need to build a truly international union movement in order to confront the global power of the bosses and in order to strengthen workers’ ability to stand in solidarity with our fellow workers no matter what part of the globe they happen to live on.

We are a union open to all workers, whether or not the IWW happens to have representation rights in your workplace. We organize the worker, not the job, recognizing that unionism is not about government certification or employer recognition but about workers coming together to address our common concerns. Sometimes this means striking or signing a contract. Sometimes it means refusing to work with an unsafe machine or following the bosses’ orders so literally that nothing gets done. Sometimes it means agitating around particular issues or grievances in a specific workplace, or across an industry.

Because the IWW is a democratic, member-run union, decisions about what issues to address and what tactics to pursue are made by the workers directly involved.

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- ___ I affirm that I am a worker, and that I am not an employer.
- ___ I agree to abide by the IWW constitution.
- ___ I will study its principles and acquaint myself with its purposes.



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Expanding Your Congregation Of Fellow Workers

By Colin Bossen

If you have been active in the IWW for a while, you have probably come across a pamphlet called “Rusty’s Rules of Order”—the pamphlet that serves as a guide to running effective union meetings. It attributes the following pearl of wisdom to Rusty, “an old Wobbly,” who served as a mentor to many younger Wobblies in the 1970s and 1980s: “Always conduct your meeting as if there were 100 people there, to be ready when the time comes when there are 100 people there.”

The IWW’s growth over the last decade has caused me to think a bit more about these words. The union now has more than twice the membership it had 10 years ago. More importantly, the union’s level of labor organizing has increased dramatically. In the last few months alone, we’ve seen pickets and a strike in the Twin Cities, a successful union election in Grand Rapids, Mich., a victory in a struggle for back wages in Portland, Ore., and a wage increase for cleaners in London. What’s more, all of this growth has been matched, or maybe fueled, by the creation of new IWW infrastructure. Since 2000, we have created the Organizer Training Committee and the Organizing Department and revamped the Work People’s College. In addition, the *Industrial Worker* has become an important place to reflect on organizing theory and methodology.

All of this is great, but it still has me thinking about Rusty’s advice. Why? Because in my time with the union, only rarely have I attended any sort of meeting that was designed for 100 people. Most meetings I have attended are exactly the opposite. They are run like discussion groups between friends. The rules of debate are frequently opaque and difficult for newcomers to follow. New members are seldom instructed on how to participate. Long-time members often dominate the debate.

If the IWW is going to continue to grow, our meetings will not only have to be designed to accommodate 100 people but hopefully 1,000 someday. Maybe that is optimistic thinking. Or maybe it is good planning. The Occupy movement attracted thousands to democratically-run encampments in New York, Oakland and other major cities. I meet more politicized and militant workers in their teens and 20s now than I ever did when I was that age or even in my early 30s. Recent upsurges of organizing by fast food workers and others who have long been considered unorganizable by business unions suggests that the possibility of a revitalized labor movement is on the horizon.

I hope that the IWW will take a major role in this revitalization. In order for that to happen, we will need to think seriously about how we behave organizationally. We will need to ask questions like: What does an IWW branch with 500 members look like? What does one with 2,000 members look like? How are branches of this size different from branches of 10, 20 or even 50 members? How can a branch with 10 members grow from 10

to 50 to 500 members? It might seem strange, but one place I suggest we look to for answers to these questions is the religious community. Organizations like the Alban Institute focus much of their energy on helping congregations address the organizational challenges they face at different sizes and figuring out how to transition between sizes.

There are two things that the institute has observed that might be particularly useful for members of the IWW when thinking about the culture and growth trajectory of branches. First, folks at Alban have noted that different size congregations have different kinds of cultures. Broadly speaking, they have identified five types of size-based congregational cultures: family, pastoral, program, corporate and mega. Each of these cultures has

their own characteristics. The description of the family sized one might sound familiar to some Wobs because it “functions like a family, with appropriate family figures... matriarchs and patriarchs [who] control the church’s leadership needs.” While the fit isn’t exact, this might describe many smaller branches where long-time or founding members set much of the agenda and make it difficult for new members to integrate or develop in leadership roles.

The second thing that the people at Alban have observed is that organizational culture is generally stable. Religious communities face developmental tasks if they are going to grow from family to pastoral size for example. Most of these tasks are centered on creating new leaders, increasing programming and developing infrastructure for integrating new members. They are also usually accompanied by conflict. People who had power in the smaller congregation are asked to share it with the new members of the now larger congregation. The details are probably irrelevant for the IWW’s purposes, but the point is crucial: for a branch to grow, intentional changes in culture and infrastructure are almost certainly necessary. And those changes are usually accompanied by conflict. If those intentional changes are not made, or if conflict is avoided, then growth will almost always be temporary, and the organization will revert to its stable, smaller norm.

If we were to apply these observations to the IWW, we could study the different size branches that exist in the union and look at how their cultures differ. We could try to figure out if there were particular patterns of conflict, cultural or organizational change that occurred when branches moved from 10 to 50 or 100 members. And we could begin the process of imagining the kinds of conflict and culture change necessary to grow a branch from 100 to 500 members.

So maybe Rusty’s advice shouldn’t be taken quite so literally. Instead of thinking about how a meeting with 10 people should be run as if it were a meeting with 100 people, maybe we should be thinking about how to grow a branch with 10 people to a branch with 100 people. That might mean we are intentional about how we function within branches of both sizes.

HOW TO HOLD A GOOD MEETING



RUSTY’S RULES OF ORDER

Graphic: iww.org



WOMEN WORKERS’ HISTORY

Chapter 63

1919

In 1919, 275,000 steelworkers went on strike to gain a union and better wages and working conditions. Elbert H. Gary, chairman of United States Steel, denounced the strike as an attempt “to sovietize the steel industry.” There was a general strike in Seattle in support of shipyard workers’ demands for higher wages. The mayor called it a “Bolshevik plot.” When New York’s garment workers struck, bosses accused their union of raising the “red flag of Bolshevism” over the city. Textile strikers in Massachusetts, fully 60 percent of them women, were said to be bent on creating a “Soviet Lawrence.”

The same year, scrubwomen and actors went on strike. Women workers struck garment shops and textile mills, and telephone companies, shoe mills and stockyards. They were joined by longshoremen, carpenters and subway employees. Even the Boston police went on strike that summer. In all, more than 4,000,000 Americans went on strike in 1919.



Most strikes were provoked by the rapid wartime increase in the cost of living. Between 1914 and 1919, the cost of milk had jumped from nine to 15 cents a quart, eggs from 37 to 62 cents a dozen, butter from 32 to 61 cents a pound. The overtime pay that allowed many workers to make ends meet disappeared with the end of World War I.

Outraged and alarmed, big business struck back with a red scare that convinced millions of Americans that every strike was the beginning of revolution. The employers’ anti-red campaign put labor on the defensive. Workers’ grievances were ignored, and civil liberties brushed aside.

(To be continued!)

Graphic: Mike Konopacki

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HAPPY MAY DAY FROM PORTLAND, OR!



Wobbly & North American News

DC IWW Marches In Solidarity With Greece

By Anarchist Alliance DC

Three activists from Greek Antifa, members of the DC IWW, along with co-sponsors Positive Force, Chesapeake Earth First! and the Anarchist Alliance DC Network (AADC) joined together and took to the streets of Washington, D.C., to show our support for the Greek working class on March 16. The group’s first stop was the Greek Embassy, where we delivered a letter with our demands. We then marched to the German Embassy, followed by a stop at the headquarters of the World Bank and International Monetary Fund.

Later we gathered for a conference with members of the Greek antifascist movement, known as Greek Antifa, as special guests. Sofia Papagiannaki, Thanasis Xirotsopanos, Vangelis Nanos and Pavlos delivered a very educational presentation about their involvement in organizing with workers in their home country, the radical/anarchist message about the economic crisis in Greece, the worker takeover of the Vio.Me factory in Thessaloniki, and the resistance to the rise of a neo-fascist right-wing. We were glad to have Alisa of the IWW Star Tickets Workers Union in town from Grand Rapids, Mich., as well. After a few years of organizing, they’ve just recently gone public and won an election with the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB).



DC Wobs protest at the Greek Embassy. Photo: Diane Krauthamer

We talked via Skype with workers at Vio. Me, who have taken over their building materials factory, restarting production without bosses. They join a rising tide of workers’ control initiatives across the globe, opening the door to another world. We want to thank our allies for coming, caring and organizing. Thanks for sharing your knowledge and experiences to make this great and necessary event happen! Workers everywhere need one another to improve their conditions. We came together for this event because we strongly believe that our collectives, groups and organizers need to form coalitions and remember our common goal: to show the system that the problem of one is the problem of all! We showed the bosses, cops, and politicians that we are watching, and we showed the workers that we have their backs!

Guest Workers Walk Out At McDonald’s

By John Kalwaic

On March 6, student guest workers from the J-1 Visa Exchange Visitor Program walked out of their jobs at a McDonald’s franchise in Harrisburg, Pa., owned by Andy Cheung. These J-1 students came mostly from Latin America and Asia for a cultural exchange in the United States in order to learn about American culture and improve their English skills. Instead, the J-1 international students ended up working night and day at a McDonald’s for 25 hours at a time without being paid overtime. The students were living in cloistered and cramped conditions in a communal house owned by their boss, with only a curtain separating the men from the women.

The students realized that this was not what they signed up for and staged a wildcat strike against Cheung. These students have been touring different cities, including Philadelphia and New York, joining flash mobs at various McDonald’s locations. McDonald’s now claims to have cut ties with its franchise in Harrisburg, stating that Cheung “has agreed to leave the McDonald’s system.”

The situation of these J-1 students was

very similar to the one in August, 2011, when student guest workers from the same J-1 program walked out for a similar reason in Hershey, Pa. These students came for a cultural exchange and ended up working long hours at a Hershey’s Chocolate factory. In 2012, the students won a major lawsuit and settled with the U.S. Department of Labor—winning \$213,000 in back wages and \$143,000 in safety and health violations at the packing facility (see “Hershey’s Workers Win 200K In Back Pay,” January/February 2013 IW, page 5). The student workers who recently walked out of the Harrisburg McDonald’s are demanding to meet with the CEO of McDonald’s while the company is trying everything it can to avoid culpability by cutting ties with the Harrisburg franchise in question. The abuse of the J-1 student program in both the cases of Hershey’s and McDonald’s is telling because they are the incidents in which student guest workers have spoken up. The students came to learn about American culture, but they ended up teaching Americans more than they learned from the program.

With files from The Nation, Labor Notes and Colorlines.com.

Sisters’ Camelot Workers Continue Strike

Continued from 1

build support for the strike. On April 1, the one-month anniversary of the strike, the striking workers presented a stack of more than 70 handwritten letters from community members asking the collective to rehire the fired union member and negotiate with the union. Also that day, Bobby Becker, an openly pro-union collective member who has been on strike in solidarity with the workers, resigned from the collective and joined the IWW.

The union then presented the collective with a package deal as a way to end the strike. In the offer, the union set aside all of their economic demands, which were all the demands they regarded as negotiable. What remained were eight non-negotiable demands centering around workplace democracy, including a rotating union representative on the collective, the abolition of the canvass director positions, and and the right of workers to hire and

fire instead of the collective.

On Monday, April 8, the collective refused the offer. Collective member Eric Gooden said, “We don’t respond to ultimatums.” Another collective member, David Senn, said he “wasn’t anxious to end the strike.” Additionally, collective member Clay Hansen said that the structural changes being proposed would be “unhealthy for Sisters’ Camelot” and that there must be “accountability” to the collective.

“The fact that six collective members continually refuse to institute structural changes consented upon by 14 workers shows me they have no interest in workplace democracy,” said Maria Wesserle, one of the striking IWW canvass workers. “Frankly, I feel their behavior has been authoritarian, which is a principle Sisters’ Camelot claims to stand against.”

The campaign at Sisters’ Camelot represents a new step for the IWW’s Food and Retail Workers United.

Against The Law: Fighting Nazis In Memphis

By X374942

On March 31, the Middle Tennessee IWW group, in conjunction with the Kansas City General Membership Branch (GMB), Students for a Democratic Society and several other anti-racist groups joined the Ida B. Wells Coalition to protest the Klu Klux Klan (KKK) coming to Memphis.

Sadly, the Memphis Police Department, the Shelby County Sheriff’s Department and the National Guard turned out to be the most militant collective police force I have ever experienced. In their effort to protect the KKK, 600 officers and soldiers met approximately 1,200 counter-protestors. They had machine guns, tactical shotguns, German shepherds, snipers and light-armored vehicles. We counter-protestors only had signs, flyers and our desire to confront white supremacists.

The police forced the group to leave a public park where we had peacefully assembled. They herded the majority of the protesters into a pen that they had labeled the “free speech zone” consisting of a chain-link fence with riot cops on every side. They went as far as sealing off the area behind the counter-protestors even though we were more than two blocks from



Photo: Preston Gilmore

the 61 KKK members and neo-Nazis who showed up.

The police then forced the group to go through a check-point where they searched everyone and threw away all of the signs, pamphlets, flags and umbrellas. The protest continued until the KKK left, and the police forced everyone to leave the area under threat of arrest.

These police and National Guard clearly violated our First Amendment rights by forcing us out of the park, trapping us within the “free speech zone” where we could not argue our ideas with the KKK, and destroying our pamphlets.

As one cop told me that we had to move forward, I started singing Woody Guthrie’s “Against th’ Law”: “It’s against th’ law to walk, It’s against th’ law to talk / It’s against th’ law to come, It’s against th’ law to go / It’s against th’ law to organize / It’s against th’ law to tell you th’ trouble on my hands.”

I could not think of a more appropriate song because Woody often toyed with the idea of the legislators and the cops making a person illegal, and, at that moment, I felt illegal.

This type of police and military action should not happen in the United States, where we supposedly have free speech.

Updates On IWW Activities In Scotland



Photo: Tom Ferroux



Photo: unknown

By Keith M., x348444

On March 23, a group of protestors, including Clydeside IWW members, picketed Poundland (left) and British Heart Foundation (right) in Edinburgh for using a government workfare scheme to boost their profits by employing workers for no wages.



Photo: Dumfries GMB



Photo: Glasgow Anarchist Federation

On March 28, the Clarion Club cycled through the town of Carlisle, and local Wobblies from Dumfries and Solway welcomed them (left). On March 30, the Clydeside IWW participated in an Anti-Bedroom Tax demo in Glasgow (right). The Bedroom Tax reduces state benefits for having “extra” rooms in social housing.

Star Tickets Workers Face Retaliation

Continued from 1

is even smaller. Now that Deirdre, who has been a strong anchor for us, is out of the office, there are only a few of us left at work holding it down as best we can. We are pushing forward. We just elected our bargaining committee, and we are working on creating a contract, with thanks to Bay Area, Seattle and Portland Wobblies for sharing their existing IWW contracts with us to study. We’ve received support through our Facebook page and through call-ins to our boss, and we held a picket outside the office on April 1, calling for Deirdre’s reinstatement. One of the most encouraging things Deirdre has experienced has been the support she has encountered throughout the local commu-



Graphic: Star Tickets Workers Union

nity. At one public event, she got an unexpected nod from the Grand Rapids Poet Laureate who publicly voiced vehement support for her and the campaign. Donations have also started to come in through a WePay account we set up that can be found through the Grand Rapids IWW blog: <http://grsbuxunion.blogspot.com>. We plan on putting together some benefit events to raise money for Deirdre, who has ongoing health problems and now has no insurance. We will continue filing ULPs, standing up for our rights at work, and trying to strategize ways of putting pressure on the boss to reinstate Deirdre before the NLRB concludes their decision.

With files from Garret Ellison of Mlive.com.

Global Fight Against Austerity

Introduction: The Global Fightback Against Austerity

By Mathieu Dube

The global ruling class has seized upon the opportunity presented by the crisis it has itself caused to assail a full-fledged attack on workers around the world. Major financial institutions have been bailed out by governments with public funds, and now the pressure is being put on states to institute all sorts of measures that have the effect of dispossessing workers from social safety nets acquired through decades of struggles. The rights of workers to organize are also under attack as the masters are rightfully apprehensive of a backlash of struggle from the people.

The bosses’ propagandists in the mainstream media claim that austerity measures are required to fix the debt problems of the states, but this pretext isn’t fooling anyone: the real aim is to create a situation that puts the workers in a more precarious position and thus create a more “flexible” and docile workforce. Indeed, the size of states’ budgets remain high and the bulk of the spending goes towards subsidizing corporations—through defense spending, for instance, in the United States. There is also the question of fiscal evasion either by legal means afforded through loopholes provided by lobbying efforts of corporations or by outright fraud, as was demonstrated by the leak that was published at the beginning of April in Spiegel Online, exposing as much as 130,000 names of people using off-shore shell companies in order to avoid paying taxes. State spending is not



The Montréal student strike on March 22, 2012.

Photo: dailykos.com

the issue that bothers the bosses; the issue is that there are still minimal protections for workers when they find themselves without work. Those who own the wealth which others produce prefer a workforce with nothing to fall back on and that will therefore accept any working conditions.

There are two main ways that states attack working people: increases in tariffs for services (for instance, student tuition hikes) and cuts in social programs (like cuts in Medicare or adding obstacles to benefits eligibility). These are usually accompanied by restrictions on the ca-

pability of the people to organize against these attacks. In Montréal, for example, limitations on demonstrations like the P-6 anti-protest law force people to give their march’s itinerary to the police. This occurs in the United States as well, where there exists a hampering of the right to unionize with “right-to-work” legislation being passed in several states. There are also attacks on conditions of public workers, which, in some countries, are the last sector still mostly unionized. Both right-wing and left-wing parties gleefully participate in this scaling back of public workers’ ben-

efits and working conditions as exemplified by Wisconsin Governor Scott Walker going after state workers and Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel attacking public school teachers. In France, it is President Francois Hollande’s so-called “Socialist” party government that eliminated *le contrat à durée indéterminée* (CDI): a long-term contract that guaranteed stability for workers). All ruling parties have jumped on the bandwagon of deficit-reducing through social program cuts.

The people are not taking it lying down, though. There has been an intense fightback by the working class all over the world. The images of riots in Greece are well-known, huge demonstrations took place in Spain and Portugal. The Chicago Teachers Union went on strike, the students of Québec did so as well, with both groups claiming relative victories. To illustrate these struggles from the ground, the *Industrial Worker* asked for submissions from people struggling at the grassroots level to give us their thoughts. Following are three of these submissions: one on Spain which has seen particularly harsh measures put in place, the two others are counter-examples of what the media would have us believe from Germany and Great Britain, which are not seen as countries hit hard by the economic problems, but the austerity measures there are implemented with just as much vigor as elsewhere.

With files from Spiegel Online.
Monika Vykoukal contributed to this piece.

Images Of Worldwide Protests Against Austerity



Protesting the crisis in Greece, 2012.

Photo: libcom.org



Protests against austerity measures grow in Romania, May 2010.

Photo: libcom.org



Students mobilize against austerity in Italy on Oct. 5, 2012.

Photo: libcom.org

Public Services In Britain During Government Austerity

By Snuff, Bristol IWW

Most activists in Great Britain believe that in comparison to our comrades in Spain and Greece, it is still early days for cuts to public services. We know that the worst is still to come, as the right-wing Conservative-led coalition government (Con-Dems) dismantle the welfare state. There is no doubt that this has got little to do with finance, but is an ideological attack on public services in the class war. Local government is in the front line of this.

It first started before the so-called 2008 financial crisis, when, under New Labour, reports released in 2004 stated that local government was full of waste and advocated cuts to backroom staff. These were administrative jobs, mainly done by women. The men who wrote these reports forgot that when these jobs were eliminated, front-line staff would have to pick up the duties, lessening the time they spent with service users. The changes in social work were dangerous, and at times fatal.

Local government was further burdened with expensive private finance initiative (PFI) deals. Here private companies built expensive public buildings like schools, and the public purse had to repay expensive mortgages. This is class theft of

our resources and money.

Things got a whole lot worse with the Con-Dems winning the election. Any pretence was gone, as we were told that we are all in it together, as banks got bailed out, but essential services were closed.

The next round of cuts started on non-statutory services, like museums, libraries, and play areas. Trust status (which puts a public service under the management of a board of trustee, effectively taking it out of democratic control) for some, whilst others are just left to rot. In Bristol it looks like seven major play areas will be allowed to disintegrate in working-class concrete areas, with high instances of obesity. If the kids are caught playing on the streets, the old bill will nick them. Libraries are closed, and charities have their funding withdrawn and have to close.

Now, it is statutory services which are being affected. Day centers for disabled adults and elderly people’s homes are being shut down, while armies of consultants conduct reviews, with one aim: the reduction of cost. Also children’s centers are being forced to close, meaning that working parents have to give up work, or rely on expensive private child care.

The trade unions try to stem the tide,

but it is proving difficult. Some unions like Unison spent the New Labour years witch-hunting activists. Many were removed, and few are left to carry on the fight. The membership, tired after review after review, keep their heads down, hoping not to be noticed and to retain their jobs. Any representative in local government will tell you how hard it is too recruit stewards. The anger is livid, but the fear of retribution outweighs the anger, and the trade union service model proves impossible to cope.

Local community groups and umbrella groups of activists are carrying the fight forward, and IWW members are prominent in these groups. They are organizing lobbies and demonstrations. They are also publishing literature, and using social media to organize a positive response. Here real democracy is at work, and nobody is concerned about an individual’s politics but in what the individual can achieve



Londoners march against the G-20 in 2009.

Photo: libcom.org

in the struggle. This is along IWW lines, and many new recruits to the Wobblies come from these broad church groups. I predict more occupations and community activities in the future. The old trade unions, with their chapels, closed shops, and endless bureaucracies, are not the way forward. Our industrial union is far better placed to work across boundaries in defending our class, employed or not, against these vicious cuts, and for the start of a new society, built on mutual aid, and compassion. From the ashes we shall rise, shaking off our chains of oppression.

Global Flight Against Austerity

Germany’s Fallacious Economic Success

By Harald Stubbe

The economic situation in Germany is excellent. The Deutscher Aktien Index (DAX, or German stock index) is at more than 7,000—a level similar to where it was before the crisis. Only a few individual sectors of the economy and some banks are a little weak. It is particularly the German working class who have contributed to this being so.

Labor costs are lower than ever, some of the cheapest internationally. More and more people have precarious working conditions. Temporary work, fixed-term contracts and part-time jobs are on the rise. Employers in Germany have the unions to thank for this reality. Labor disputes are rare and when they do occur,

are very predictable. However, the working class is also at its most discontent since the end of World War II. Work pressure continuously increases, as does the fear of losing one’s job. Since the introduction of Hartz IV (a law implemented in 2005 which basically means a steep reduction in unemployment benefits coupled with workfare schemes), job loss also means a complete slide into social marginalization. Unfortunately the growing discontent has not yet led to resistance. It seems that, be it in elections or in labor struggles, most German workers aren’t ready to change things yet. Suffering and pressure have not grown to that point yet, and the loss of solidarity in our society also contributes its part to persistent inaction.

Progressives continue to look with envy to France or Spain and admire their forms of struggle—especially strikes in France, despite the low union membership there (or perhaps because of it?), which seem desirable to us Germans. Lenin’s saying, “If the Germans staged a revolution at the train station, they would buy tickets for the platform first,” remains true.

Translated by Monika Vykoukal.



Anti-austerity march in Berlin, 2010. Photo: demotix.com

Some Notes On The Spanish Situation



CNT protests labor “reforms,” 2010. Photo: libcom.org

By José Luis Carretero Miramar

It is evident that the social situation in Spain has arisen in an uncontrollable dynamic. As a result of an unprecedented financial and economic crisis, the productive and social dismantling caused by the government’s Plans of Adjustment imposed on the population is reaching unsustainable levels.

The equation has been simple: the gigantic Spanish construction bubble, swollen at its base with private external debt by some extremely voracious financial entities, aligned with a political class that is a product of the reform without rupture of *franquismo*, of which consisted the so-called “democratic transition,” has burst with the heat of the global financial crisis of 2007. Its implosion has been confronted, moreover, with distinct mechanisms of the socialization of said debt, like the European line of credit of €100 billion conceded to rescue the banks, and indirectly guaranteed by the state.

Basically, they are trying to make the whole of the population (and, principally, the working class and the most vulnerable sectors of the middle class) pay for a debt that has risen to a difficult to determine amount, but impossible to repay. In these moments, the Plans of Adjustment

implemented, which follow the neoliberal orthodoxy, are causing a complete collapse of the basic pillars of the so-called Social State (which, as an aside, never actually developed toward European standards in Spain), with an absolute lethargy of economic activity which is expressed in devastating statistics like a year-to-year sales decrease of at least 12.6 percent or a decline of state revenue intake by close to six points of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in the last year.

Of course, this suicidal (because it becomes evident that the debt cannot be repaid) and profoundly antisocial strategy is having undeniably radical effects. The unemployment rate has exceeded 25 percent of the active population; close to 20 million people (more than 40 percent of the population) live in economically precarious conditions; there are 1.7 million households with all of their members unemployed; and 63 percent of said unemployed no longer receive any benefits.

On top of that, the bursting of the real estate bubble has pushed a catastrophic situation on a large part of mortgage debtors who bought a house at the height of the cycle and now, in light of the explosion of the unemployment and the economic lethargy, cannot pay. There are over 500 evictions daily, with more than 95,000 in the last six months, and the suicides of people evicted from their homes are beginning to multiply.

Not everybody, of course, loses with the crisis: the historic gap between the parts of the national renting market in the hands of wage earners and in the hands of the business owners is rapidly closing,

connected and disorganized. We are part of the formation of a parallel social block constructed in the environment of the assemblies of the 15-M Movement (the movement in favor of a new constituent process), the struggles against privatization and the affirmation of the radical sectors of social movements and the labor movement. At the same time, the major unions, tremendously bureaucratized, try to maintain their power through a strategy consisting of putting themselves at the head of the mobilization: when the rebellious wave rises, wearing them down and impeding their coming together, and abandoning them when the wave falls.

Against this background of emergency and rekindling of struggles, of rediscovery of the tactics of assembly and ground-up popular movements, the non-authoritarian movement seems well-placed, with its practices and discourse, to present itself to and fill a gap in the social consciousness. The effective cooperation of syndicalist organizations (Confederación Nacional del Trabajo [CNT], Confederación General del Trabajo [CGT] and Solidaridad Obrera) and their relationship with other militant unionists, has momentarily favoured a trend which paves the way for the autonomous and libertarian “scene,” and its ability to influence the aforementioned social milieu around the 15-M that has already spontaneously adopted the practice of assemblies

These conditions impose the necessity of constructing, creating and maintaining an open and conspiratorial position that permits building a grand alliance that raises the foundations of the beginning of a process of social transition, whose necessity is each time more shared in front of the global and ecological crisis in progress, toward another mode of life and of production in which the dignity and the freedom of the masses is the center of a vital transformational experience.

Translated by Daniel Perrett.

**May Day Greetings from
Recomposition!**

★ ★ ★

**An unofficial publication
by and for wobblies.**

<http://recomposition.info>

*****MAY DAY GREETINGS*****

**Working class emancipation can only
succeed on a sustainable planet, living
“in harmony with the earth.”**

-Harry Siitonen, SF Bay Area GMB

Special

The IWW And Earth First!: Establishing Roots

By X344543

Judi Bari was both an Earth First!er and a Wobbly from 1988 to 1993 and during that time there was a close alliance between the two organizations. Although some assume she brought the two together, the truth is more complex. When Judi Bari joined Earth First! and the IWW in the summer of 1988, Earth First!ers and Wobblies were already discussing the idea of forging an alliance. There are many reasons for this, but the overarching explanation is that Earth First! and the IWW are really different manifestations of the same revolutionary impulse.

The IWW, founded in Chicago in 1905 by radical working class anti-capitalists from veterans of various movements and struggles, united around the idea of forming One Big Union of the working class. They offered a revolutionary alternative to the class-collaborationist American Federation of Labor (AFL). The IWW pledged to organize all workers—regardless of ethnicity, gender or skill level—by industry rather than craft. Instead of the conservative AFL motto, “a fair day’s wage for a fair day’s work,” the IWW sought to abolish wage slavery altogether. No longer would workers collectively enable their own oppression by crossing each other’s (craft-based) picket lines, they said. The IWW would organize the working class together. This was summarized by the slogan, “An injury to one is an injury to all!”

The IWW set out to achieve this creatively, becoming known as much for its “right brain” artistic contributions to working-class culture as well as its “left brain” organizing activities.

The IWW’s artistic creativity was both visual and auditory. The IWW’s use of clever graphic imagery, especially in cartoons and “silent agitator” stickers conveyed IWW propaganda far more succinctly and effectively to workers (many of whom were illiterate) than any manifesto.

Likewise, the IWW was famous for its voluminous collection of songs and labor hymns, which slyly conveyed the union’s message of class struggle in rhythm,



One of the many stunning IWW/Earth First! graphics.

Graphic: ecowobbly.blogspot.com

rhyme and meter. The latter resulted not just from the abundance of clever song smiths that joined the One Big Union but also largely out of necessity, to get around arbitrary anti-soapboxing ordinances enacted throughout the Pacific Northwest. These had been specifically designed to prevent IWW members from engaging in street corner oratory.

Such blatant First Amendment violations still exempted the singing of religious hymns, such as those performed by the Salvation Army (who themselves had a particular condemnation of the Wobblies and their call for earthly paradise, instead of “pie in the sky, when you die”). The IWW would write alternate lyrics to these hymns that both argued in favor of class struggle and against religious dogma that enabled the perpetuation of wage slavery.

Perhaps the most lasting of the IWW’s artistic contributions to radical working-class culture comes from one person, Ralph Chaplin. It was he who wrote the anthem “Solidarity Forever.” Chaplin also introduced the iconic black cat logo, “Sabo-Tabby,” a clever play on “sabotage,” symbolizing the organized, collective and conscious withdrawal of efficiency by the workers at the point of production.

These cultural icons of the IWW were used extensively during the free speech fights that took place in the Pacific Northwest during the IWW’s heyday in the 1910s and 1920s, many of which were part of the Wobblies’ efforts to organize an industrial union of lumber workers throughout that region. During one such struggle, in Spokane, Wash., several of the songs sung by the members involved in the thick of it were printed on red card stock and sold to the membership at-large to raise much-needed organizing funds, thus giving birth to the “Little Red Songbook.” As a result, the IWW became known as “The Singing Union.”

Less well-known is that these rich and colorful parts of IWW culture, much romanticized by historians and radicals today, were designed as tactics in the service of advancing strategy at the point of production. Often their practical utility is forgotten, downplayed, or even deliberately hidden in favor of painting

a picture of the IWW as a cultural curiosity rather than a union with clever and effective strategies that was at the same time revolutionary and fun.

Indeed, all of these facets coalesced around the IWW-backed Lumber Workers Industrial Union’s winning of the eight-hour workday and improved conditions through their effective “striking on the job” in 1917. Little did anyone realize, however, the effect the IWW’s struggles would have on the future environmental movement at the time.

Fast forward to 1980. Five environmental activists, led by Dave Foreman and Mike Roselle, disillusioned with mainstream environmental organizations, started a new group, inspired by Edward Abbey’s best-selling novel, “The Monkeywrench Gang.” They called their group “Earth First!” They found the mainstream organizations far too willing to make compromises with industrial polluters in exchange for preserving small, ultimately insignificant patches of wilderness for fear of alienating wealthy donors. In doing so, they lost sight of the far more steadfast visions of their founders.

To Earth First! this was not only unacceptable, it was suicidal. The founders believed—and to a large extent science has largely proven—that all living beings on the Earth are interconnected in a singular web of life. Biologically, an injury to one is an injury to all. Those who pushed for compromise argued from the standpoint of “better half a loaf than none at all,” to which Earth First! would respond by first explaining how very much less than “half” of the proverbial loaf had been gained, and moreover saving anything less than the entire loaf portended the eventual loss of the entire loaf. They adopted the slogan, “No compromise in defense of Mother Earth!” and called their philosophy, “biocentrism,” as opposed to human-centeredness, or “anthropocentrism.”

Earth First! wasted little time, engaging in many campaigns, often utilizing creative and humorous acts of civil disobedience. The first such major act involved the “cracking” of Glen Canyon Dam, although the “crack” was really a long roll of black paper that was unrolled to create the illusion of a fracture, a sort of “merry prankster” attempt at conveying the message that was nonviolent, but nevertheless militant. From this many other similar actions followed in defense of wilderness and in protest of despoliation by industrial pollution. Earth First! grew quickly as a result, even drawing in “Monkey Wrench Gang” author, Ed Abbey, in short order.

Inevitably this drew opposition from corporate interests and mainstream environmental groups (no doubt in fear that their thunder—not to mention funding base—would be stolen). The latter merely called Earth First! “irresponsible,” while the former called them “terrorists.” In-

deed, Earth First! faced the same stigma assigned to the IWW by the employing class and reformist socialists back in the beginning of the 20th century.

One might assume that these experiences would have led Earth First!’s founders to the same fundamental conclusions reached by the IWW, primarily that capitalism cannot be reformed. At least on some level, it did. In opposing the destruction of the environment, which is an inherent function of capitalist economics (the privatization of wealth, including what we call “natural resources,” and the externalization of costs to the working class, not to mention all other, nonhuman, species), Earth First!ers constantly found itself in opposition to the employing class by default.

However, Earth First!ers generally didn’t see themselves as being part of “the left” politically. Dave Foreman once described his movement by saying, “We’re not left; we’re not right; we’re not even in front or behind! We’re not even playing the same game!” Foreman’s statement revealed many of the contradictions that were deeply ingrained within this radical environmental movement.

To begin with, Earth First! wasn’t a formal organization. It had no constitution, no officers (other than the editors of its de facto organ, the *Earth First! Journal*) and no standards for identifying formal membership. Therefore Earth First! had no official policies or internal process. There was only a loose and ephemeral consensus of purpose behind those that identified as Earth First!ers. Yet Earth First! had chapters that met regularly and consistently, and more were forming as its reputation grew.

Furthermore, Earth First!—which had quickly sprouted international chapters—saw little difference between the destruction of the Earth by capitalist corporations and that of so-called “communist” states. While any leftist worth their salt knows perfectly well that what most people call “communism” is actually much closer to capitalism in practice than it is different from it, hence the pollution, Earth First!ers tended to eschew class analysis and political economy as “anthropocentric” concerns, and therefore, not relevant.

That was due, in no small part, to deeply engrained hostility to Marxism among some (though not all) of Earth First!’s leading thinkers, particularly Dave Foreman, Ed Abbey and Chris Manes. All three of them had looked to a number of ecological thinkers from the past, including John Muir, Aldo Leopold, Wallace Stegner, Rachel Carson, and Henry David Thoreau, among others. All of them had advanced tenets of the philosophies of biocentrism, but they had also drawn inspiration from a very dubious source: Thomas Malthus, whose essay “On Population” was

Continued on next page



Judi Bari.

Photo: judibari.org

Special

The IWW And Earth First!: Establishing Roots



Graphic: IWW Environmental Unionist Caucus

Continued from previous page
not an argument for environmentalism, but a defense of class privilege in reaction to the anarchist ideals of William Godwin. Earth First!’s animosity towards leftism and anarchism can be partly explained by the fact that Dave Foreman had once been a Goldwater Republican, and though he had jettisoned much of the right-wing political baggage of this prior association, Foreman, like many other ex-rightists, could never completely embrace political theories associated with “collectivism,” even those that were libertarian in nature. As a result, he shunned class analysis and mass-based organizing in favor of individualistic covert guerrilla “eco-sabotage” or “monkey wrenching.” Such thinking patterns lead Foreman to embrace misanthropy. Although Foreman was not the “leader” of Earth First! he was often identified by outsiders as such, a notion that was enforced by his being editor of the *Earth First! Journal* for much of the 1980s and his being one of Earth First!’s most outspoken thinkers. Foreman and his adherents advanced a school of thought that blamed the destruction of the environment not on the inherent economic processes of capitalism, but instead on an over-abundant, over-prolific human population aided by technology. The solution to the problem was a return to pre-industrial society, perhaps even hunter-gatherer existence, with a greatly reduced human population

(though no specific process or plan was ever articulated for achieving such a shift), leading Earth First!’s critics—including Murray Bookchin—to suggest that Foreman’s perspectives could be interpreted in any number of less than savory ways, even as an endorsement of fascism. Foreman, as well as his fellow misanthropes, Ed Abbey and Chris Manes, did not work to dispel such rumors when each of them made statements of their own—some of them taken out of context—which suggested (among other things) that aiding developing nations, giving amnesty to illegal immigrants, and seeking a cure for AIDS interfered with nature’s processes for stabilizing the population. The vast majority of Earth First!ers did not share these views. While they may have held some mildly misanthropic and Malthusian beliefs, for the most part their actions were far more progressive and class conscious in their intent. Indeed, as we shall soon see, in California’s Redwood region, Earth First!ers routinely made overtures of solidarity to timber workers when the latter had disputes with their employers. The IWW still existed during that time, of course, and a handful of its members came in regular contact with Earth First!ers. A few IWW members even joined Earth First! and vice versa. Ironically Dave Foreman, in spite of his misanthropic tendencies, was actually enamored with the IWW. He and his fellow founders actively looked to leftist organi-

zations, including especially the IWW for cultural inspiration—though obviously they had eschewed Marxist and syndicalist economic analysis in doing so. Ralph Chaplin’s sabo cat icon graced the pages of many an *Earth First! Journal* in reference to ecotage. And, in a clear homage to the IWW, Dave Foreman even compiled various songs written by the copious number of Earth First! musicians into what he called, “The Little Green Songbook.” Meanwhile, Ed Abbey—who described himself as an “anarchist,” albeit an individualist one—also spoke favorably of the One Big Union, perhaps because rumor has it at least, his father had been a dues-paying IWW member. These connections did not go unnoticed by contemporary IWW members. None other than the Rosemonts (Penelope and Franklin), Carlos Cortez, and Utah Phillips all came into regular contact with Earth First!ers. The aforementioned Wobblies spoke favorably towards the new radical environmentalists, which drew a backlash from IWW members critical of it. Critics pointed to the misanthropy

and class ignorance of spokespeople like Foreman, Abbey and Manes. Their supporters countered by noting there were more similarities between the IWW and Earth First! than differences. They pointed out that there was one key difference: while the IWW talked of direct action, Earth First! was actually taking direct action. That there was a fundamental difference between direct action against industrial activity, and direct action at the point of production, was often ignored.

The debate raged on, under the surface in the IWW, until Franklin Rosemont—who was an editor of the *Industrial Worker* in 1988—decided to force the issue, quite literally. That year the publication’s editors made the decision to base a majority of each issue on a particular theme. For May, that theme would be “radical environmentalism,” and much of the focus—indeed MOST of it—would be on Earth First! Little did anyone know just how significant that decision would turn out to be. To be continued...
Next installment: “How Pacific Lumber in Humboldt County was yet another historical bridge between the IWW and Earth First!”

X343543 (Steve Ongerth) has been an IWW member since 1995 when he was inspired to join the OBU after meeting Judi Bari. He has just written a soon-to-be-published book about Judi Bari to be called, “One Big Union: The WHOLE story behind the bombing of Judi Bari and Darryl Cherney.” Details at <http://www.judibari.info>.



Logger Dave Lancaster, with loaded shotgun, faces off with Earth First! demonstrators at Whitethorne, CA in August 1989. “You fucking commie hippies, I’ll kill you all!” Judi Bari is at lower right. After this photo was taken Lancaster punched 50-yr. old grandmother Mem Hill, breaking her nose. Mendocino deputy sheriffs refused to arrest him, and the D.A. refused to prosecute, despite the efforts of witnesses.

Photo by Greg King (c) 1991, used with permission

Photo/Caption: albionmonitor.com



Graphic: ecowobbly.blogspot.com

Reviews

Socialist Organizing Attempts At Pizza Hut: A Review

Wilsdon, Tony, and Brent Gaspaire. Manifesto of the Fast Food Worker. Brooklyn, NY: Socialist Alternative, 2013. Available online: <<http://www.socialistalternative.org/publications/fastfood>>.

By John O'Reilly

The IWW is hardly the first organization to attempt to take on the terrible conditions that rule the food and retail industry in North America today. In the heyday of industrial unionism, restaurants were frequently organized as part of larger drives by unions to organize basic industry. In some places, like Detroit, workers wanted to organize and unions were so effective in organizing food and retail industries that large union federations had competing food and retail affiliates that routinely raided each other's memberships. Imagining such a high level of union density in contemporary food and retail industries seems preposterous today. Yet in the current environment of anti-worker legislation and dwindling union membership, other unions and organizations on the left have attempted to organize in this important sector of the service economy.

In late 2003, organizers with the Trotskyist political group Socialist Alternative initiated a campaign amongst Pizza Hut workers in western Washington state. Their organizing began at a franchise that had 61 stores at the time. The record of their organizing, techniques and analysis of the industry is contained on their website as a pamphlet titled "Manifesto of the Fast Food Worker." Along with that text, the analysis is derived from a few articles posted on Socialist Alternative's website relating to the drive and an interview with one of the authors of the "Manifesto." The campaign collapsed after a vicious anti-union response from management, but the organizer I spoke with suggested that

the pamphlet represents the most complete picture of the drive. Reading the "Manifesto" and the various news pieces from the campaign's "underground newspaper" shows a picture of a union drive with many similarities to IWW organizing in the fast food industry but also points towards some key differences.

An important feature of the "Manifesto" is a long section detailing the economic conditions which have brought the rise of fast food and its prevailing low-wage, no-benefits trend. This analysis discusses the ways in which fast food owners as a whole, Pizza Hut, and even the specific franchise where the campaign was undertaken, have structured work in a way that gives the in-shop employees and delivery drivers few options. The authors have done an excellent job of critiquing the way the industry has consistently lobbied for a lowering of the minimum wage and against any attempts to raise it. The "Manifesto" itself also raises important ideas about how surplus value is extracted from workers during the production process and explains this process in easy language that applies directly to the food production and service industry. They also mention the importance of organizing all pizza shops as a means to bring industrial strength to the campaign. As a piece of educational material, the "Manifesto" shows that the authors were deeply committed to connecting their struggle with an industrial outlook and a socialist analysis.



Graphic: socialistalternative.org

The authors also provide important ideas on how to organize at the workplace for those who are interested. Some of these, such as organizing a committee and staying low-key until the time is right to strike, are classic labor organizing tactics and speak to the authors' ability to organize effectively. The pamphlet also touches directly on the question of labor law, encouraging workers to avoid the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) election process and, alternatively, relying on voluntary recognition from the employer. This is interesting because it highlights the important weaknesses of the NLRB election approach. It does not explain exactly how one would achieve voluntary recognition, other than through sheer numbers—a situation which is much easier to imagine than create. The "Manifesto" also suggests that interested fast food workers should organize and then affiliate with a left-leaning union in their area, as in the case of workers in western Washington. The organizer told me that the campaign initially started with a union that claims jurisdiction over fast food workers but that organizers felt the ILWU would have served the drive more effectively.

The pamphlet's organizing advice seems useful for the most part, but it is interesting to see a lack of emphasis on direct action. The tone of the piece is quite militant and promotes a rank-and-file approach to organizing, yet the main focus seems to be on slow building and going

public in a large way, then with overwhelming support to immediately demand recognition. Experience has shown many IWW organizers that direct action taken on the shop floor before going public is an important way for union members to build up their confidence and dedication to the organization, as well as bringing about concrete gains before publicly attempting to negotiate with the boss. By encouraging co-workers to walk through struggle before standing openly to the world as union members, our organizers have often found success in building workers' experience over time. The campaign organizer I spoke to mentioned that the campaign was not able to go public on its own terms, but was discovered by management after they got hold of the underground news bulletin. In news articles associated with the campaign, a member mentioned that the campaign only had support in 15 out of 61 franchise stores. The organizer I spoke with stated that there were only a handful of stores with lead organizers. While this is certainly not a small number, it brings up questions of capacity and the need to build underground in a way that engages workers for as long as possible before going public on our own terms.

Fast food is an important sector of the food and retail industry. Along with sweatshop production facilities, it sets the lowest bar against which employers can measure conditions. As Wobblies working in food and retail, we should familiarize ourselves with other campaigns to organize workers in our industry and see what kind of approaches have been successful and where campaigns have fought hard but encountered roadblocks they have been unable to get past. If conditions are ever to change in our economy, those of us who struggle at the bottom of the economy will have to be those who organize the most effectively.

Book Of Poetry Critiques Jewish, Working-Class Culture

Coval, Kevin. Schtick. Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2013. Paperback, 200 pages, \$16.

By John MacLean

"..say it/ again/ until you get it/ right/ to learn my name/ in total is to/ (w)holy know your own." ~ from "the holocaust calls for its orthonym"
"wake in this new day." ~ from "all the pharaohs must fall"

Kevin Coval, in his collection of poems, "Schtick," desires that people should know themselves, and others. He begins with the "demented call" of something he wishes not to be his father; he also mentions the faint songs of a "righteous" father, a Tzadik, born of the torn "circumstance" that is Chicago. It's not easy to resist being assimilated to the history, the *schtick*, of our births. In a poem called "kike" (intentionally lower-case), which comes in the form of an entry to "The Oxford English Dictionary," entry number 15 reads: "kikes are (not) white." In the poem "midrash of the body," you read with possibility "the world is over and can be made/ again. my body Isaac, my body Ishmael/ we need to go / to go/ on the lamb," and then we are left stumbling over bodies on the deck of the Mavi Marmara, in the poem "ben" [son of], reading: "ben fathers who were/ pushed around themselves./ ben the bullied begat sons/ who bully. ben a bitch/ ben sarah/ barren."

And still there are more dangers. In "on becoming a man," you read: "...who thought to make boys the center of the room/ with ripe acne, underarms, a million dick jokes/ what makes us men?" In "At the Passover Seder," you read of the Haggadah and "new freedoms" that can come into the light: "it says the younger generation will push the older generation, chal-/ lenge injustice, demand we

grow as a community to become more in-/ clusive and humble." The young shouldn't be silenced, as they put questions to their elders ("each new generation/ here to keep the elders honest"). Later, in the poem "explaining myself," a son writes to his father: "...this time dad, we are on the/ wrong side of history i mean jews who support israel without question,/ i mean our family and friends in this country, i mean it's like we are/ mississippi crackers, white south afrikaners when Mandela was locked/ up. we are in the dugout pitching expletives at Jackie Robinson..."

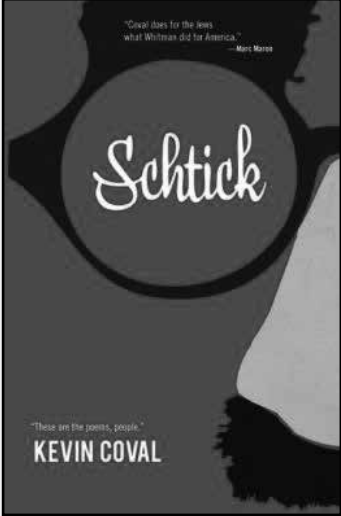
In line with this dangerous construction of masculinity, under the heading "Shiksas," a word for young non-Jewish women, is a series of poems on shame, pornography, and a moribund photographic "inheritance." A family joke has the son going wrong in availing himself of a "shiksa," when he should have been thinking plural all along. You read, in "boxer," of a young woman who lands a part in the film "Jarhead," ("something she'd been fighting/ her whole life for"); she has sex on video as a unit of Marines watches from within the larger film. The phantasmic musings of "nightmare #1" and "#2" find another "goose-stepping toward" his object, up in lights, "a reluctant/ prisoner dragging chains to the jailhouse." Finally, you read of George, the grandfather, and his tomb-like album of nudes, none of whom looked like the women back home, and how "quite is/ a man's right."

Somewhere in the middle of his book Coval puts together poems about Don Rickles, Sid Caesar, Allen Ginsberg, Monica Lewinsky, Joan Rivers, Lenny

Bruce and Roseanne Barr. The Rickles poem, from a 1985 presidential roasting, ends ominously with: "all the hints/ at something/ wrong. the seat/ near these goys/ the hottest./ the grand dragons/ burning beneath/ the surface." In a poem dedicated to Roseanne Barr you read of masks, parents made to hide who they are, and passing in a foreign church; then you read: "marriage is a kind/ of mask,/ like fame/ and plastic surgery./ even name changes/ can't cover up all/ we are.

empires/ will crumble and sag/ into the sea." The section ends appropriately with "WWLBD," a poem about the fear that accompanies stepping off in right performance, and the "ancestral" refrain: "What Would Lenny Bruce Do? What Would Lenny Bruce Do?"

In a section called "tuesdays with mel gibson," Coval goes after the famous actor ("pompous pilate"), the outgoing Pope in "nazi pope," and the down-presenter Henry Ford. He ends the poem "passion of the kike" with the words "give back my religion/ cause you fuckin it up." Coval sees Christianity, and it's hard to argue with the point, as a stolen religion. He explores, in verse, the strange new-crusading ideas of end-time U.S. supporters of Israel, and has one commentator calling these a five-part play in which Jews "disappear in the fourth act." In dealing with the often made charge of deicide the author writes that "jesus was participating in/ some sort of jewish resistance btw/ and i am for the resistance"; ending the poem with a prayer "and i would love to see your chariot come/ and i would love to see you ascend elsewhere/ and leave the earth to us mud people." The pain embedded in all



Graphic: kevincoval.com

of this culminates in the bizarre "drive-by kidnap" execution of "baby jesus" behind the goal posts of a football field, at night.

Later sections in the collection are titled "the secret relationship between Blacks & jews" and "all the pharaohs must fall." There is the "blackened up" Al Jolson, "the world's greatest entertainer/ [who] took from the world's most pained," and another Israeli performer promoting colonialism, "a just say no to drugs nancy reagan rapper/ who is critical of young people resisting/ military service." Finally we have Abraham Raymer ("the lie of pie") and David Schriber; the first a "yiddisher lyncher/ the jury of peers/ the acquitted/ the freshly born/ and baptized/ american/ white man," and the next, walking his family into the street, to meet Blacks forced off the sidewalk in small town Tennessee. No one is "chosen" in a world where people simply "take what's not theirs and lie about it" after.

Throughout the book are found expressions of solidarity for those who work, and for any who toil for just ends. In the earlier mentioned "on becoming a man," you read of a boy "awed and unsure," a man "awed and uninsured," but one always "on the broke side of the constant war/ against the working." In "henry ford wraps hitler's birthday present" there is this: "...the bosses/ never worry./ they reign and rig/ and reich/ and wreak/ havoc on the hands/ of the callused." Can a world be created in which masses of people aren't wounded for the imagined advance of a few? In "post-schtick," the work's final poem, Coval relates that "we [learn] so much/ from our executioners/ we become/ executioners"; and he ends the short piece insisting that we not be knee-jerks in blaming victims, but that we "grab the hands/ that fashion the noose/ &/break them./ baruch Hashem."

Reviews

More And Better Organizers: Advice For Revolutionary Workers

Twin Cities IWW. Weakening the Dam. Fordsburg, South Africa: Zabalaza Books, 2012. Available online: <<http://zabalazabooks.net/2012/05/24/weakening-the-dam>>.

By Klas Batalo

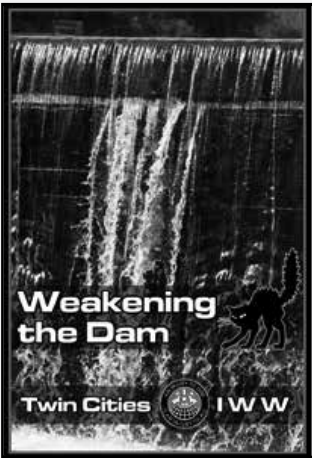
I just got my hands on a hard copy of “Weakening the Dam” by the Twin Cities IWW from Zabalaza Books. I originally skimmed various online versions of the pamphlet a few years ago, but I would highly recommend having it in your hands to keep notes or pass off to other fellow workers.

The main reason for this pamphlet is explained in its introduction. If we are going to build a revolutionary union movement we need more and better organizers. The pamphlet mostly consists of articles and advice that can be found in the *Industrial Worker’s* “Workers’ Power” column. The whole pamphlet reads like a “greatest hits” of that column, which is especially useful for us workers who haven’t always kept up on our dues enough to have the *IW* or the General Organizing Bulletin sent to us.

The pamphlet starts by providing some context by recounting organizing stories and campaigns from years past from a few fellow workers. In particular, there is a story from United Postal Service (UPS) workers and their experience reminiscing about how good it felt to fight back against the bosses when a newbie continued to get harassed for being militant about work pace like the rest of their fellow workers. Also included is

a story about bike messengers who were celebrating an anniversary of a work action in which they shut off their two-way radios to pressure the bosses into accepting their demands. A year later many were fired, but none of them would have changed a thing—the experience of collective action being remembered as “life changing.” In this section an argument is made that action precedes consciousness, and that often workers have to experience struggle in order to create ruptures with the type of resignation that comes with the day-to-day drain of class struggle at work. I agree with this analysis and am glad to see fellow workers advocating this within the union. Struggle changes everything.

The next few stories and reflections are on how to take baby steps in your workplace organizing without losing confidence or trying to bite off more than you can chew. The section “Emotional Pressure and Organization Building” goes into how, if you properly map out the situation at the workplace, it often can just take a little bit of emotional pressure via collective action against lower management to change things for the better on the shop floor and gain the confidence of your fellow workers building committee organization. A corollary to this is the advice of “Stick to the Script!” When we decide to collectively confront our bosses using direct action



Graphic: zabalazabooks.net

tactics like a march on the boss, it is advisable to make a plan and to map out what you think the boss will say beforehand. We are often used to taking orders and are taught to be afraid of the boss. Sticking to a script and remembering to insist that it isn’t about whatever the boss brings up, but that you have these demands and that is what you are there to talk about is how you can keep the confidence to put the pressure on, and win.

Most of the rest of the pamphlet is about how to bring people into the union and develop them. A few simple phrases are used to help us as workplace organizers to remember how to do this on regular basis, including: “Know the Union, Hear the Union, See the Union” and “Replace Yourself.” These are easy refrains, not hard to forget, right? “Knowing the Union” is where we are all at now.

You are reading this on a site of interest to IWW members. You know the union, you agree with its politics, or have had the union change your life. “Hearing the Union” applies to those who are sympathetic to the union and think it is a good idea, but maybe need to be given a little more confidence that it is a legitimate effort. Once that happens, these folks will start coming to meetings and be active. “Seeing the Union” is where most workers are at and they are going to have to see the union in action benefiting everyone in the

workplace in order to get off the fence and take a side. Replacing yourself is the act of replicating your skills and sharing your knowledge with other fellow workers so none of us become specialists, and so we decentralize our working-class power. There is a list of various ways you can do this and I suggest that every Wobly read this section if just because most of these suggestions are very helpful in preventing your IWW General Membership Branch (GMB) or Industrial Union organizing from becoming a boys’ club.

The rest of the pamphlet is a collection of texts on setting short, medium, and long-term goals, strategy, and tactics in a campaign. There are also very helpful checklists for recruiting members to your workplace organizing committee as well as new members to your local GMB. It ends with one of the most helpful guides which I think could be of great help to new Wobblies organizing which is a sample timeline for a non-contractual direct unionist campaign. Overall “Weakening the Dam” is a great companion to the organizing skills Wobblies and supporters can learn in the IWW’s Organizing Training 101. I recommend every IWW member and workplace organizer take its advice to heart.

Further Reading: “A Rebel Workers’ Organizing Handbook” (http://zabalazabooks.files.wordpress.com/2011/08/a_rebel_workers_organising_handbook.pdf) and “Direct Unionism: A Discussion Paper” (<http://libcom.org/library/direct-unionism-discussion-paper-09052011>).

Time For Canadians To Wake Up And Support Temporary Workers

Lenard, Patti Tamara, and Christine Straehle, eds. Legislated Inequality: Temporary Labour Migration in Canada. Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2012. Paperback, 407 pages, \$34.95.

By Peter Moore

Canada’s approach to labor shortages has shifted from recruiting immigrants to recruiting temporary workers. It’s a reality that simply does not match up with Canada’s image of itself as an immigrant nation. The mainly academic authors of this book’s 12 chapters approach the problem from several angles, each concluding in turn that recruiting temporary workers doesn’t work for Canada on economic, social or ethical grounds. While there are a few chapters that lack depth, overall this book is an excellent in-depth look at what the government is doing wrong and it provides ideas on how to fix it or how temporary workers and Canadians can work together to fix it.

By the Canadian government’s own count, each year more than 180,000 temporary workers enter Canada to meet what it calls “skill shortages,” adding to the temporary workers who are already here. In 2005, that was 245,000 workers. “Temporary migration has surpassed the quota of immigrants accepted by Canada on a yearly basis,” according to contributors Patricia Tomic and Ricardo Trumper.

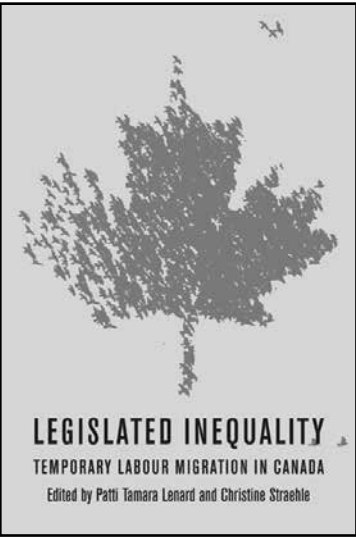
In a labor market of 17.5 million Canadians, this is a large annual influx, particularly when one takes into account the size of two of the most affected national industries: agriculture, which has approximately 309,200 workers, and healthcare, which has approximately 2.1 million workers. There are now more temporary workers in Canada than there are candidates for permanent residency. This quiet policy change represents a dramatic shift in how Canada takes from the world’s workers.

Changes introduced by the Conservative government made it possible for many industries to recruit temporary workers, if employers can prove they could not hire Canadians first. What some employers do to qualify for temporary workers is advertise their jobs at low wages. With few

qualified applicants, they apply for permission from a government agency so that they can hire temporary workers from across the world. These workers, with few opportunities at home even for those who are well-educated, seek work abroad so they can earn enough money to get ahead. As Christine Hughes notes in her case study of Guatemalan workers in Canada, “Costly Benefits and Gendered Costs,” the temporary worker earns more in one hour at minimum wage in Canada than the worker would earn for a day’s labor at home. Despite all the discrimination and abuse faced by many workers, Sara Torres and Denise Spitzer’s research found that all of the live-in caregivers they interviewed thought that coming to work in Canada was “worth it.”

The high price of working in Canada, however, is well detailed in this book. Employers exercise extraordinary control over the workers, often providing accommodation, assigning long hours, sometimes illegally holding their healthcare cards and passports and isolating them from Canadian society and potential allies. The twin threats of deportation and of not being asked to return to work the next year are omnipresent for these workers. That they are volunteering to subject themselves to these conditions indicates both their desperation and their willingness to make strategic sacrifices to sell their labor to the highest bidder that they can access. In turn, the migrants’ own governments are helping Canada gain access in order to boost the flow of remittance cash from abroad to boost their failing economies.

This book critiques Canada’s three major programs for farm workers, caregivers and other jobs. Dating back to the 1960s, the Seasonal Agricultural Workers Program (SAWP) matches workers from the Caribbean (and now Mexico) with Canadian farmers for planting and har-



Graphic: amazon.ca

vesting. The arrangement is managed by the governments of Canada and the partner countries through long-standing diplomatic agreements. These workers pay into Employment Insurance, the Canada Pension Plan and income tax, but for the most part they cannot access any of these services because they are non-citizens or leave the country before they qualify for benefits.

The Live-in Caregiver Program allows Canadian families to hire a foreign worker to live with them and be their children’s nanny or take care of elders or people with disabilities. The carrot for these workers, primarily women, is that they can apply for permanent residency in Canada if they work full-time for a family for two years. It is the only temporary worker program that has a clear path to citizenship for workers generally defined as “low skill.”

The Temporary Foreign Worker Program allows Canadian employers to hire either low skill or high skill workers. Low skill workers are defined as those with either a high school diploma or two years of job training. High skill workers are those holding university or college degrees, or trades certificates, or that have specialized skills. The Canadian government broadened the number of industries that can hire these workers. In contrast with the SAWP, recruitment is brokered by private employers’ recruiting agencies and the International Organization for Migration. This privatization of the migration process gives employers and recruiters extraordinary control over these workers, with minimal standards imposed by government.

Three chapters of this book document the many barriers facing the so-called low-skilled workers to becoming residents of Canada and the inherent class bias of the Canadian immigration system. This discrimination contrasts with Canada’s ef-

forts to facilitate the recruitment of highly-skilled workers as immigrants; it seems as if Canada is doing little to resolve its low skill labor shortage through immigration. Only Manitoba has taken serious action to deal with the problems facing migrant workers, passing the Worker Recruitment and Protection Act in 2009, according to Tom Carter, Delphine Nakache and Sarah D’Aoust. Manitoba has also taken steps to make it easier for temporary workers to become permanent residents and to protect better temporary workers’ rights. Still, there seems to be no uniform dedication by provinces, territories and the federal government to stop the abuse of workers, reduce the precariousness of temporary jobs, and smooth the path to citizenship for those willing to immigrate.

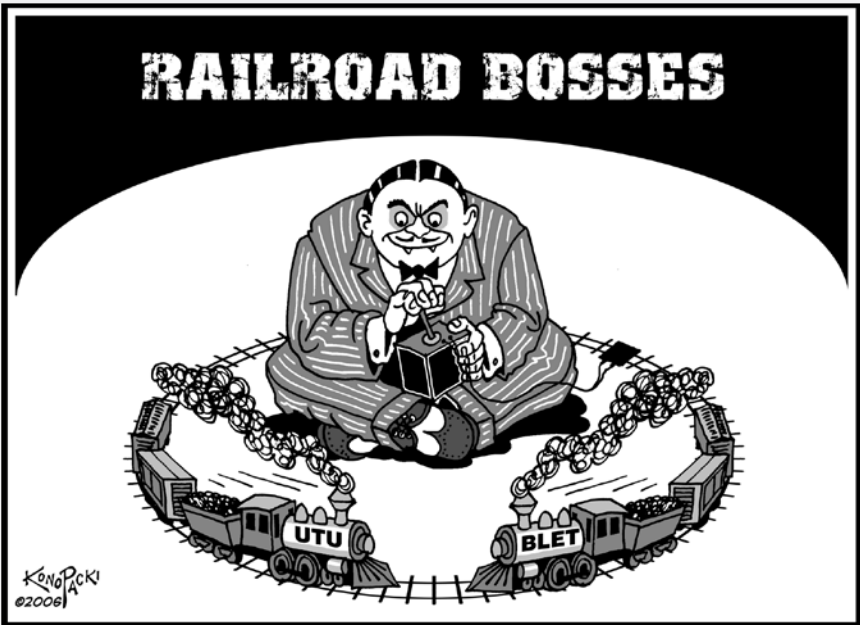
Progressives and liberals should also pay attention as their hobby causes are not immune either. Community food activists are asked to reconsider the ethics of their “locavore” lifestyles and “buy local” economic strategies. In their essay, “Buy Local, Hire Global,” Kerry Preibisch and Jenna Henneby point out that the federal government has implemented a policy of making more foreign workers available to meet the needs of local food industries even though these workers are “highly precarious labor such as migrants without status or those facing contemporary forms of debt bondage.” How ethical, then, is eating locally-grown food, if the workers who planted and harvested it were flown in and living under constant threat of deportation?

One of the editors, Patti Tamara Lenard, tidily sums up the problem in her final chapter: “Temporary migrants operate at the margins of Canadian society, the victims of multiple forms of discrimination... the rights restrictions to which they are often subject legislate their vulnerability to exploitation and indeed often legislate exploitation itself.”

It is time for Canadians to wake up and ally themselves with temporary workers to ensure their labor—and their choice to immigrate to Canada—are respected. As the activist writers of one chapter say: “Good Enough to Work? Good Enough to Stay!”

Wobbly Arts

Casey Jones, The Union Scab



Graphic: Mike Konopacki

By JP Wright, www.railroadmusic.org

Fellow workers on the railroad get your head outta the sand,
about ifin when the carriers are gonna run one man!
Because there’s a union culture of scabbery,
between the UTU and the BLE-t.

[Chorus]

Casey Jones, There’s a lot of them around.
Casey Jones won’t put the reverser down!
Casey Jones gonna stick it to me and you...
If we let ‘em run trains with a one man crew.

This is the way Mr. Debs said it would be,
if we kept up this jurisdiction scabbery.
The carriers have it just the way they like,
with our unions divided up and just itchin’ for a fight!

Back in the day, hell, we should have merged
and I’m here to tell ya we were actually on the verge,
of organizin’ a union with incredible might!
all we have now is one hellava plight.

Casey Jones was in the UTU-e.
Casey said to hell with the B of LE!
If you don’t know what I’m talkin’ about-
Better study up on our history!

The BLE, well they were afraid too.
with the general committees screamin’ what are we gonna do?
So they got together and kicked out their president,
and that’s just a little of how the story went!

[Chorus]

Engineer, Conductor, Train Service Employee,
Utility road positions, a blurrin’ of craft autonomy!
Railroads have been thinkin’ years ahead.
While our unions seem to be playin’ dead!

Casey say’s “they won’t run one man!
The FRA and unions are gonna make a stand!”
but once we had 5 and now we only got 2,
when they sold us out and sidetracked the caboose!

[Chorus]

Well the conductors will say to Casey “won’t you help us win this fight?”
And he is sure to say “you better go take a hike!”
“You stole my job with that RCO,
And when the telephone rings off to work I’ll go!”

[Chorus]

Most of us say that we should all be One,
Now that’s a big task, but one that must be done!
So you better straighten up and open your eyes!
There ain’t nothin’ left to us but to ORGANIZE!

Thank You



Photo: toledoblade.com

By Tom Jayman

thank you giant eagle, for giving me carpal tunnel and tendinitis and ruining
my ankles and knees so that I have to use orthodics now

thank you high school football coach, for pushing me so hard that I had bruise
marks along my shoulder blades and stretch marks as well

thank you, college, for pushing me to stay up for three days until I hallucinated
so that I could write your papers and take your tests

thank you, Jimmy John’s, for advertising as freaky fast and ruining my driving
record from speeding tickets

thank you, canvassing industry, for throwing me on some random street, forcing
me to piss in backyards of abandoned houses

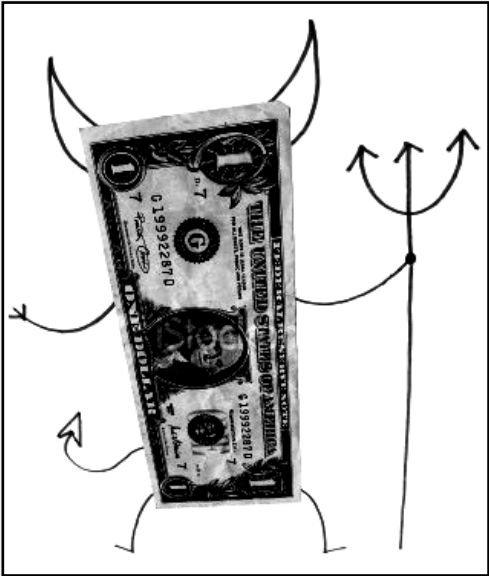
thank you, electoral machine, for laying me off on election day

thank you capitalism, for creating another revolutionary

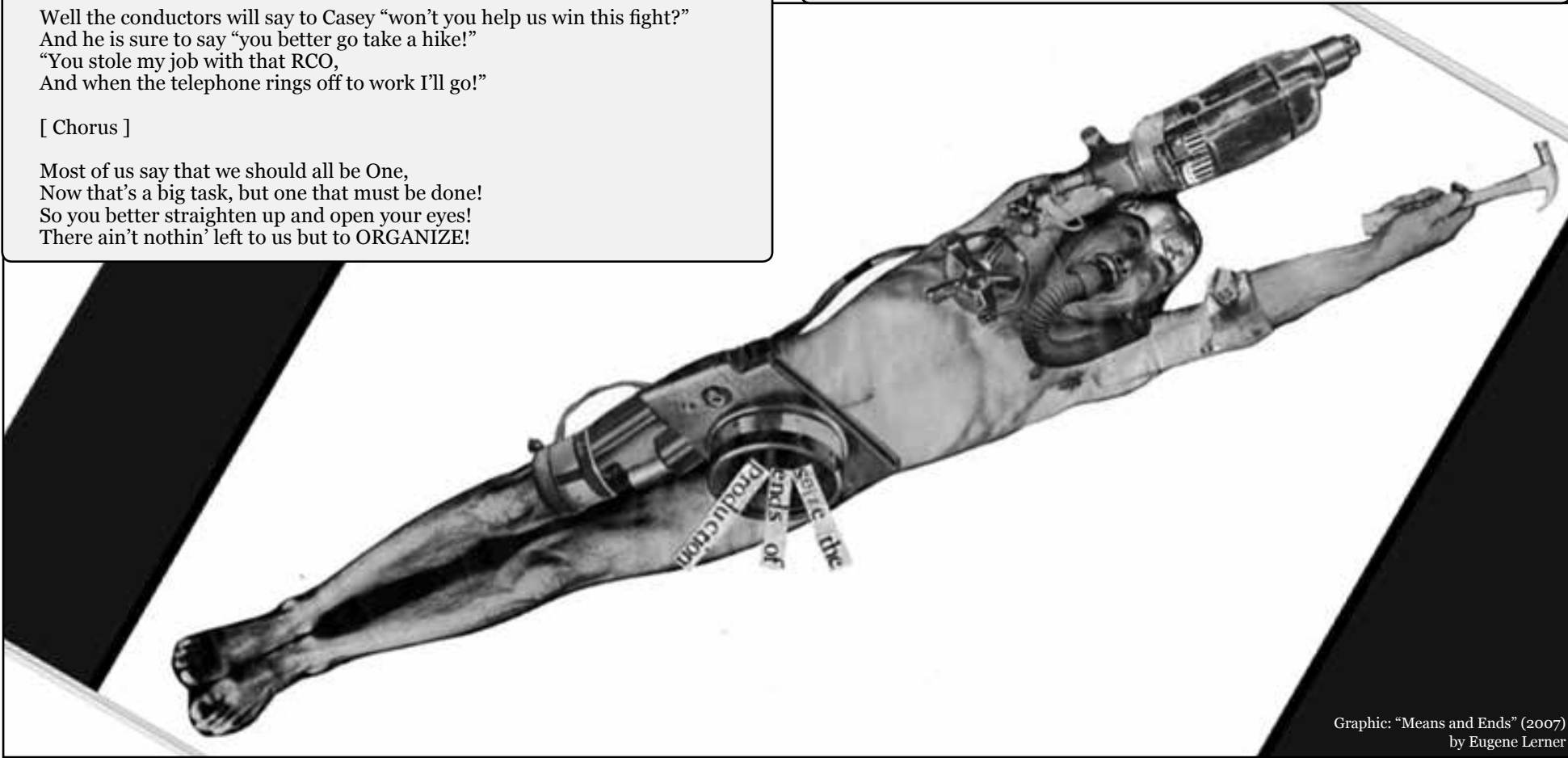
The Mistress Money

By John Kaniecki

She’s a sultry siren singing her song
A temptress with a taunting desire
Men blindly serve her doing all wrong
Cold as ice hot as hell fire
Money, that’s her name
Evil is her favorite game
She seems to be a mighty power
Her servants kill, destroy and devour
But she is simply a piece of paper
Free your mind you shall escape her
Money, that’s her name
Greed it is to blame
Don’t fall in love with Mistress Money
Don’t make her your sweet honey
She’ll give you a thrill
All the while setting you up for the kill
She laughs when nothing’s funny
That’s Mistress Money



Graphic: thenerdess.tumblr.com



Graphic: “Means and Ends” (2007)
by Eugene Lerner

Wobbly Arts

The Pizza Diaries: Life And Death In The Restaurant Business

By Greg Farnum

Now this: I finally got a job. From ad agency to pizza parlor. I'm a driver. I didn't realize how bad I was at first. A disaster. It's a wonder they didn't fire me...not finding the address, forgetting the salad. And again not finding the address. It went on and on. I'm better now and getting accepted by the crew—even though I'm two or three decades older than they are. And I am getting to know them.

Where's Tim? And again, on another occasion, where's Tim? Trash-talking, big, loud, Gulf War veteran; concerned father; former owner of a pizza place; number one employee—both driver and cook...seems to know every address in our territory ("After you turn off Perry," he tells me, "It's the first house on the second block on the left—she's a Pontiac hillbilly whore, but she'll give you a good tip") and every aspect of the kitchen. He doesn't show up. Again. His house has no hot water.

Crack, the kitchen crew tells me. Heroin, they say about Eddie, the owner's cousin and partner. Maybe that was Older Ryan who told me about that. Older Ryan is on probation. For drugs. He seems to be doing pretty good, remaining pretty positive, hardworking and positive. Hear him later talking with Summer, Eddie's sister, who's here to chop vegetables, about passing the drug test.

"What are you on probation for?" he asks.

"Cocaine," she says. "What about you?"

"Pills."

"And a guy comes around a few weeks later on a Sunday night. Eddie goes outside to talk to him. "Is that Eddie's drug dealer?" I ask Young Ryan.

"More like Eddie's his drug dealer."

It's cold. Tim's house has no hot water and no heat. He says he has a space heater in he and his wife's bedroom. They sleep there with the kids.

"Did you man an APC?" I ask him when we're in the back pressing out dough, getting cooking oil splashed on us as we pound the dough into shape in the nasty old oven pans we use.

"No, we drove around the desert in old pickup trucks. We delivered munitions, the shells tied down in the back with wire. They bounced around, dude, big time. Sometimes one of them would fall off." He shows me the thumb that was partially blown off.

I'm doing better now. With my hourly near-minimum wage and (especially) tips I can just about pay my/our bills (the ones we aren't ducking). And buy some Christmas gifts.

"I didn't know what to expect," I tell Older Ryan, "I've never worked a Christmas Eve shift here." It's Friday. My Friday shift runs from 10:30 a.m. to 10 p.m. The other guys get here an hour earlier and work varying hours. "Neither have I," says Ryan, "none of us have." Then he complains again about Eddie. Shooting up in the bathroom, the allegation, last time we worked together. Young Ryan was there that night. "If I hear about anybody on drugs I'm gonna beat 'em with a stick," he had said. He doesn't take drugs. Or not many. Or he's not dependent on them.

"He shoots up in the bathroom?" I ask, the scholar in me double-checking sources. It's the kind of question I usually leave alone—I don't get tips for scholarship.

"Yeah, couldn't you see it in his eyes?"

"I didn't look too closely at his eyes. I saw it in his face. He was messed up."

"He's seriously fucked up dude. I'd like to knock some sense into him. He doesn't know what he's messing with."

No orders. A bright, cold winter morning. We all do some desultory cleaning up. Still no orders. The place is looking pretty clean. Fairly clean. As close to clean as it ever gets.

Finally an order: two small salads for pickup.

Eddie decides to leave early but not before Older Ryan hits him up for some pills.

Quiet, still: nobody wants pizza early on a Christmas Eve. Older Ryan and Tim talk. They both conclude their lives suck. "I'm just a loser, dude; I admit it," says Ryan. Tim admits nothing.

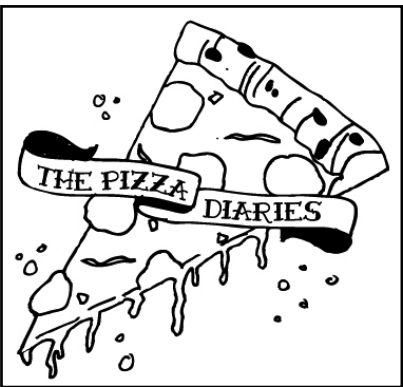
Still no orders. The owner, Enmar, sends us home. We clock out and wish each other Merry Christmas.

I was worried about this shift, the first one back after our Christmas vacation. Our Christmas vacation was one day: Christmas. But anyway, I was worried because of my brakes—they barely worked, which meant I had to drive slowly, and they said I was too slow already, even when I had good brakes. The thing is, I refused to drive like a maniac—like Eddie. On principle. I didn't want to run anyone over just so I could get one more delivery, one more tip. Plus, it was the only car we had, my family and I, so if I smashed it up we were screwed. Then there was the little matter of insurance. I didn't have any. If I got pulled over for speeding and the cop asked for proof of insurance we were screwed. Then there were those two old unpaid parking tickets, one of which was from a delivery. So I always drove safely—at the speed limit or just a bit above. The result was that my position at the store was always a bit tenuous with Enmar and Eddie—even with good brakes.

As it turned out I shouldn't have worried. As was usual for a Sunday, Enmar, after cooking pizzas and fussing over football scores on the internet (he always had bets down), left early, leaving the place in Eddie's charge. Nobody likes to be there when Eddie's in charge. The staff—the dwindling staff—usually had lots to say about that, but tonight was different. For one thing, Eddie was well-dressed; for another, his eyes weren't drooping (though he barked orders nonstop whether his eyes were drooping or not). Tonight he had guests—his brother's family.

"You're Old Man Winter," said the brother using my store nickname (mine was one of the better ones), smiling and extending me his hand. "Hi, I'm..." whatever it was. Then he proceeded to talk and joke and eat pizza and discuss the football scores with Eddie. They both had bets down. Eddie had bets down on all the National Football League (NFL) games. Every week. "Damn!" he yelled when the internet showed the Steelers had just scored a touchdown. So they all talked and joked and had a good old time, except the wife who sat in a corner and minded and crabbed at the kids, two little ones, the youngest of whom was dressed in a Santa suit. With all this jollity and pizza eating I was able to make my deliveries with a minimum of oversight and comment, all of which were done relatively quickly despite the bad brakes (there were few cars on the road seeing as how this was both a Sunday and the first day after Christmas) and pick up a few dollars besides, which was doubly good because with the rent coming due we needed every dollar we could get. And then the orders stopped coming in ("It's a dead night," Eddie said) and we started early on closing—sweeping, mopping, taking out the garbage and generally tidying up. Young Ryan, the kitchen staff for the night, reluctantly put away his cell phone (upon which he apparently played video games) and even more reluctantly helped out. I looked around for some stray pieces of pizza to take home to the family. There were none. Still, I left feeling good. At least part of me did. The other part felt like I'd just dodged a bullet, for one night and one shift, and I'd have to start all over again with the next one.

"This sucks, dude," said Tim. He was



Graphic: thecultcollective.com

having a bad day. Best driver/key employee, he knew every aspect of the business: "Man I been doing this for 20 years...my first job when I was a teenager was in a pizza joint." He even owned (or managed?) his own pizza parlor once. I often wondered how he went from that to fat guy in a dirty shirt working dough in a back room in between deliveries. Then, after he failed to show up for work a couple of times, I'd gotten an inkling, though I had no way of knowing if that talk about crack was based on facts or was just more pizza parlor gossip/bullshit. There was less doubt about his temper and his mouth.

"Cocksuckin' motherfucker! I hate that motherfucker! I'd like to smash the motherfucker's face 'cept I'm afraid I'd break my hand again. Broke my hand too many times punchin' guys. Last time was in jail. Aw fuck it, I'm gonna take a shit. You hear that everybody? The fat guy is gonna take a great big long shit!"

Beneath all that, though, was a decent guy. For instance, he tried to get a job for his neighbor, Cindy, when she got laid off.

"You know her? How do you know her?" asked Enmar.

"She's my wife's former lesbian lover."

"You're kidding."

"No, dude, I am not kidding." She got the job, part time, working in the back room prepping the food, cleaning and helping out with deliveries when things got busy. She was good, too, a hard worker who didn't mind pitching in and helping you out with whatever you were doing. Small, troll-like, on a diet, pleasant to talk to, going to school so she could better herself and provide a decent education for her son, and with a mind of her own. "Don't forget your salad or your pop or anything,"

yelled Crazy Eddie one Friday night when we were swamped with orders and everything was chaotic and the emphasis was on rushing out the door as soon as possible rather than standing there and taking a second look at your order. "Remember, anybody who forgets anything gets fined \$20." Cindy's eyes opened wide. "The day I get fined \$20 is the day I quit," she said, "I ain't no robot."

And Tim was devoted to his children too, both the daughter that lived with his first wife and the step-children that he helped his current wife raise (and the baby he talked about, was that his or another of his step kids?) and he usually didn't let adversity get him down. Like the fact that he wore a dirty shirt because there was no hot water at his house to wash anything because the gas had been turned off for non-payment, so consequently the furnace didn't work either and everybody slept in one bedroom—the one with the ever-dangerous space heater. "Man, it's cold in my house, dude."

Back when I first started this job, I told my daughter "Only one day on the job and I already know everybody's name. It's Dude." But that's another story. In this story, Tim was strangely subdued. I didn't know if it was the hot water or the heat or too much of the rum he'd been talking about, and I didn't ask.

"This sucks," he repeated, looking around at the backroom where we'd just finished pressing dozens of pans of dough, then added "you know in the Sims game, pizza worker is listed under slacker careers."

I laughed and asked him, "In the game if you want to get a better job, what do you do?"

"You go to the newspaper and look at the want ads and apply for a better job."

This is an excerpt from Greg Farnum's e-book, "The Pizza Diaries." The full text can be found online through <http://www.barnesandnoble.com>.



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International News

Spain: Mainstream Unions Support Big Business, CNT Fights Back

By Brandon Oliver

Easter week, one of the busiest travel weeks in Spain, was supposed to see three strike days at Iberia Airlines, the country’s flagship carrier. This strike was called by the Confederación Nacional del Trabajo (CNT), a revolutionary anarcho-syndicalist union with which the IWW has a long history of mutual support, and Coordinadora Estatal del Sector Handling Aereo (CESHA), a baggage handlers’ union which is not political, but which rejects state funding and professional union staff, and operates through assemblies.

The goal of the strike was to continue a series of mobilizations that have been building since Iberia was bought by British Airlines and the new holding company, IAG, announced a plan at the end of 2011 to spin off a new “low-cost” carrier, IB Express. Originally this plan was supposed to preserve existing jobs and create 500 new ones, but as time went on it became clear that this was a way to restructure capital and discard as many workers as possible.

Of course, in a country with a 25 percent unemployment rate, the workers did not accept this without a response. Although there has historically been a large divide, with the pilots seeing themselves as separate from the ground staff and flight crew, there was a possibility for united action. The pilots struck at the end of December 2011, and in January 2012 the two majority unions, the Unión General de Trabajadores (UGT) and the Confederación Sindical de Comisiones Obreras (CCOO), worked with the large range of smaller unions that are present in Iberia to call for a strike of all staff—which was

then sabotaged when the two majority unions called it off. However this backfired when the CNT branch in Iberia was able to form a coalition with the other minority unions and escalate the fight, beginning with a march of 1,500 workers and supporters (two of whom were IWW members who happened to be in the area) that same month in Madrid.

This mobilization has continued, with the minority unions gaining increasing support from the workers as the majority unions revealed just how yellow they were, up through March of this year. At that point, with the threat of united strike action by all of the unions, the government stepped in and imposed mediation. In the midst of large daily mobilizations around the airport, the majority unions signed an “agreement” which includes 3,141 layoffs and fierce cuts against the workers who will remain. The CNT and CESHA declared a strike in response, but they were unable to persuade any of the other minority unions to join them, so they abandoned it for the time-being. To drive the nail in the coffin, Iberia is prosecuting those two unions for declaring an illegal strike, and has fired the 14 members of CESHA’s strike committee (five of whom have since been reinstated) and seeks to do the same to the CNT.

Why is this important for IWW members? The landscape of labor law, union politics and social history in Spain is very different from the Anglo world where the IWW is rooted. Furthermore, Iberia is one very specific company, and there are certain factors that have allowed the CNT to have a more effective presence there than they have elsewhere. However, the CNT at Iberia can serve as a good model for what a small revolutionary union which seeks to grow should be doing.

The Spanish dictator Francisco Franco died in 1975; the CNT, having been illegal during his reign, was re-established quickly afterwards and was tightly linked with a quickly growing workers’ movement that worked through assemblies and rejected paid staff and government mediation, as well as political party manipulation. Many of these workers’ struggles took place at the Madrid-Barajas Airport, where a CNT branch was founded the next year. In order to restore social peace, in 1977 the Spanish government worked with the main “Left” parties to



Workers protest Iberia at the Madrid-Barajas Airport, Feb. 18, 2013.

Photo: iberia.cnt.es

create the Moncloa Pacts, the Spanish version of the National Labor Relations Act. This sought to channel all union activity through parliament-style elections, which allow for the existence of many unions. The unions receive money from the government based on how many votes they receive, and paid union time for officers from the company. Although there is no dues check-off and membership is completely voluntary, the result is similar—the unions become structurally separate from the workers and identify with the interests of those who sign their checks.

The CNT was the only major union at the time to reject this agreement, although a minority left to become what is now the Confederación General del Trabajo (CGT). Following this there were several decades of government repression, relative social peace and media and political party manipulation, amongst other things. Finally around the turn of the millennium the CNT began to have more of an echo among workers who wanted to organize without subsidies or staffers. Relative to the IWW, the CNT is very large—about five or six times our membership in a country with a population comparable to California’s. Nonetheless, it is still very much a minority union, one of many. The section at Iberia, which is relatively strong and active in many parts of the company, is somewhat exceptional, and the comrades there give part of the credit to the elitist pilots’ union, which boycotts the elections and negotiates directly with the company, although probably for different reasons

than the CNT.

So what do you do when the country’s economy collapses and the main political parties and their unions are negotiating with the European Union (EU) about how best to sell off all of the public services and rapidly nullifying practically the entire code of labor law? This is a discussion that is happening within the CNT and elsewhere, including within our organization, and it’s an important one. What the CNT has been doing at Iberia for 35 years seems to be a good model, a balance between two extremes that are often proposed: a closed “revolutionary political organization” or a semi-radical “mass movement.” A revolutionary union does not need to encompass the entire working class, but it also should not confine itself to workers who are already radical. It can act as a fighting organization on the shop floor (what “union” used to mean) and at the same time maintain a higher vision of a struggle against capitalism. This is not merely theoretical—it will have profound impacts on how an organization goes forward. Even if a revolutionary union preserves its specific identity, which it should do, it can also act as a catalyst among other workers’ groups, working-class organizations, and the broader working class in general. None of us know the best way to do this yet, but the CNT section at Iberia is showing one route to get there. As global capitalism tries to throw Spain in the same trash pile as Greece, the CNT might be able to act as a catalyst turning things in the other direction.



Iberia protest.

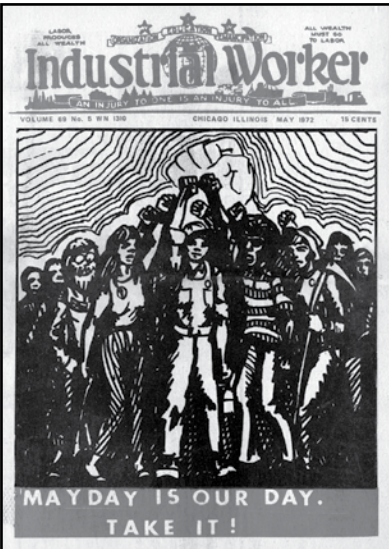
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May Day Greetings



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from the *Industrial Worker*, the official newspaper of the Industrial Workers of the World



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World Labor Solidarity

A COLUMN BY THE INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY COMMISSION

The IWW formed the International Solidarity Commission to help the union build the worker-to-worker solidarity that can lead to effective action against the bosses of the world. To contact the ISC, email solidarity@iww.org.

Unions From Around The World Meet In Paris

By the ISC delegation

On March 22-24, many independent unions from around the world came together in the capital of France to network and consult on how to act together and in a more powerful way amidst the global economic crisis. The IWW participated in this meeting—called “International Trade Unionism: We are building the future!”—with a delegation sent by the International Solidarity Commission (ISC). The event was organized by Solidaires of France, the Confederación General del Trabajo (CGT) of Spain, and the Central Sindical e Popular (CSP) of Brazil. More than 60 unions and organizations from across Europe, North Africa, and the Americas, as well as from Asia (Indonesia, Turkey) participated, with groups from Eastern Europe, Scandinavia and the United States notably absent. Altogether the weekend brought together over 250 people.

The main part of the conference was structured around three broader topics which had been circulated in advance: our answers, proposals, visions we have in the face of the crisis; alternative unionism as part of broader social movements; and proposals for joint campaigns and international actions/initiatives.

After short speeches by representatives, the debate was opened for discussion among all participating organizations. The first day was very general, without many concrete practical proposals for building actual transnational solidarity. However, some examples were discussed, such as an Italian union that tried to build a committee of industrial resistance among Fiat plants in France and Italy to fight the profit-driven policies of the bosses.

Low Participation by Women

During the first audience-contribution to the debate, three women posted a placard saying “Why are there no women (on the stage)?” on the podium. Although this action was supported by applause, it was not addressed during the following hour and only men got the microphone throughout the first part of the discussion. The only women that appeared on the stage during the whole event only had the role of moderating the discussion and did not give any speeches of their own. Despite the issue of gender, it was mentioned by participants that we also should include more issues of immigrants.

A great portion of the unions there focus on organizing the public sector and education, though there were a variety of industries (banking sector, automobile



Union representatives from around the world. Photo: GLAMROC

industry, agriculture, etc.) represented at the meeting. There were also other organizations such as students’ associations, groups fighting for the freedom of Western Sahara and so on.

After the first break, the second round of discussion started with a statement by the ISC delegation of the IWW, addressing the need for organizing along supply chains on a whole industrial scale, followed by independent unionists from Greece.

What’s Next?

The second day was a bit more concrete as we talked about results, plans, and future common work. These proposals included: an email list of all participating organizations for future exchange and communication, a possible common global day of action in October (though it is unsure whether this will be realized), a website to facilitate networking, sector-based working groups (education, banking sector, automobile industry, etc.) that had already been formed and met during the conference. There will also be a coordination meeting open to all unions represented at this conference that will be smaller and focused on actual work. Moreover, two texts came out of this event: one summarizing the standpoint of the unions and the results of the conference that will be published soon, and the second was a call for May Day that should be distributed by the unions in their regions on International Workers’ Day. Both of these texts will be translated into several languages, but there will be no possibility of discussing the contents that are set by the three inviting unions. Although these declarations had an anti-capitalist and class-conscious touch, they also contained political demands of redistribution and financial regulation. Hence, they were radical in parts, but also reformist in other regards.

Although it was an interesting and insightful meeting, it would be better if more rank-and-filers than union officials and paid staff would participate in these kinds of events.

French Workers Hold Bosses Captive

By John Kalwaic

On March 20, workers at the greeting card company Edit66 in France sequestered the head of the company and the chief of the Dutch firm which owns it after being fired without pay. Dutch company Mercurius bought the card company Edit66 in the early 1990s. The company originally had 60 employees, but recently employed 37, 19 of whom were laid off without severance pay because the company claimed they had “no money.” The employee protest targeted their two



Dutch boss blocked by workers. Photo: rawstory.com

chiefs, Paul Denis and Merthus Bezemer, who were both allowed to walk around during their detention.

With files from Agence France-Presse.

Workers’ Self-Management In Egypt

By John Kalwaic

In February, an unprecedented development took place as workers and students took over the city of Port Said and began running it under a system of workers’ self-management—called the “Egyptian Paris Commune.”

This takeover was a response to a massacre of 40 people that took place during clashes between police and protesters in which the protesters forced the police out, allowing the people take the city. The protest had erupted within the framework of the general uprising against President Mohamed Morsi’s new dictatorial government’s restrictions of speech, organized labor and women’s rights.

After the uprising, President Morsi agreed to rescind the police presence in Egypt, leading to a withdrawal of the military and police. Workers took over



Workers at Port Said, Egypt. Photo: anarkismo.net

their workplaces and limited production to what was necessary and what the people of the city wanted. Students and workers manned checkpoints and called themselves “the popular police.” Under this system, the city is safer than ever before.

The Egyptian Paris Commune is a successful experiment that many Egyptians want to duplicate in other cities.

With files from A-Infos.

May Day 2013: Occupy Your Workplace!

Across the world, workers are under attack by the 1%. The past year has also brought signs of hope for a resurgent labor movement.

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